SPORTS/ A29

RP netters clinch Davis Cup tie against Pakistanis

BUSINESS/ B1

BSP pushes sale of $1-B in bonds to OFWs

NEWS/ A2

UN special rapporteur arrives to look into RP political killings

ENTERTAINMENT/ G1

While sales slide, stars set to party at Grammys

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, February 12, 2007 ★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 66 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Islamic jurists write sermon against terror

By Nash B. Maulana
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—THE GUARDIANS OF THE House of Opinion known as "muftis" have written a "khutba"—a year-round sermon to be read in mosques—supporting the government's antiterror campaign.

Ustadz Abdullah Hamja Utto, the mufti of

ISLAMIC/ A23

Did British star, flight attendant do it or not?

SYDNEY—BRITISH movie star Ralph Fiennes is at the center of a mile-high sex scandal after he allegedly became amorous with an Australian flight attendant during a long-haul flight, a report said Sunday.

DID BRITISH/ A12

BYAHENG LANGIT NGA ITO!?

Team Unity

Mix of Kampi, Lakas-CMD, NPC, LP

ANGARA

ARROYO

DEFENSOR

MAGSAYSAY

ORETA

PETILLA

PICHAY

RECTO

SOTTO

ZUBIRI

SINGSON

?

Opposition

Alliance of old, new opposition figures

AQUINO

CAYETANO

COSETENG

ESCUDERO

LACSON

LEGARDA

OSMEÑA

PANGILINAN*

PIMENTEL

ROCO

TRILLANES

VILLAR*

*GUEST CANDIDATES

Opposition fields full Senate lineup

GMA's Team Unity to name 12th candidate today

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño

CALLING ITSELF THE "Grand Coalition," the country's political opposition yesterday completed its power-packed senatorial lineup, pitting it against an administration ticket studded with fewer stars but backed by a nationwide machinery and Malacañang's political clout.

The opposition alliance finalized its slate with the inclusion of Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan of the Liberal Party, former Sen. Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng and detained Navy Lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillianes IV, who is facing mutiny charges.

Earlier, the opposition confirmed that its 12-member lineup would also have Senate President Manuel Villar.

Countering opposition moves, Malacañang announced yesterday that its so-called Team Unity ticket would now include independent Sen. Joker Arroyo and Nacionalista Party Sen. Ralph Recto, two lawmakers whose championing of opposition causes in the past had riled the Palace.

The last-minute maneuverings came on the eve of the deadline for the filing of senatorial candidacies.

While the opposition has completed its lineup in the race for 12 senatorial slots up for grabs in the May 14 polls, the administration has so far filled up only 11 slots.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said the 12th slot in the administration lineup would go to a yet unnamed Muslim figure.

Officially, the administration slate is called "T.E.A.M (Together Everyone Achieves More) Unity."

OPPOSITION/ A20

AMID bursts of confetti, lovers kiss at the "Lovapalooza" Valentine's Day celebration in Pasay City in an attempt to get into the world record books for biggest number of couples kissing simultaneously. AP

6,124 RP couples kiss to break world record

ONCE AGAIN, FILIPINOS ARE living up to their reputation as among the world's most romantic people.

More than 6,000 couples kissed simultaneously in a Manila parking lot at midnight on Saturday, and organizers of the event called Lovapalooza said they had set a world record.

"More than 6,000 this time; we broke the record," shouted Howard Benson, one of the organizers, as fireworks went off and confetti and heart-shaped red balloons filled the air.

A total of 6,124 couples kissed simultaneously for at least 10 seconds in a parking lot outside the Mall of Asia, said Albert Almendralejo, producer of the Lovapalooza.

An official tally showed that 6,124 couples kissed simultaneously, organizers said, but the number still needs to be verified by an independent auditor and approved by Guinness World Record officials before it becomes an official world record.

The current record is held by 5,875 couples kissing at an event organized at the Elisabeth Bridge in Budapest, Hungary, on June 25, 2005.

Thousands of mostly young men and women gathered in the early evening at the mall by Manila Bay and danced

6,124 RP COUPLES/ A12

Joker, Ralph defend joining GMA slate

By TJ Burgonio

TWO SENATE STALWARTS WHO HAD fought alongside the opposition defended yesterday their decision to run under Malacañang's senatorial slate, saying the country would be better off allowing President Macapagal-Arroyo to complete her term unless her opponents could offer a better alternative to impeaching her.

Saying that "in a crisis, one must take a stand," maverick Sen. Joker Arroyo and Sen. Ralph Recto of the Nacionalista Party confirmed they were joining the administration's Team Unity ticket.

"We ran for the Senate and won on the Arroyo administration slate. Nothing that has happened since gives us reason not to do the same in our reelection bid," they said in a joint statement.

Until yesterday, both Arroyo and Recto had kept their cards close to their chests, keeping silent on their political plans despite Palace statements that they would be part of the administration lineup in the May 14 senatorial election.

Recto had earlier indicated he might run as an independent.

In the 2001 polls, Arroyo ran as an independent and Recto as a Nacionalista.

Arroyo and Recto said they had crossed swords with Ms Arroyo over a number of major issues, including her order placing the country under an emer-

JOKER/ A12

KAMPI ALIGNMENT

Cebu, Bulacan govs leave Lakas

By Jolene R. Bulambot,
Inquirer Visayas
Carmela Reyes
Inquirer Central Luzon
and Michael Lim Ubac

THE GOVERNORS OF TWO VOTE-RICH provinces—Cebu and Bulacan—have bolted the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats over differences with the ruling party, but remain allied with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia has launched One Cebu, a party independent of Lakas, to thwart moves by opposition legislators to divide Cebu into four provinces.

Pablo John Garcia, the governor's brother, said One Cebu decided against affiliating with Lakas because the ruling party endorsed candidates in the 2004 elections who were not in the Garcia slate.

In Bulacan, outgoing Gov. Josefina de la Cruz and at least 21 mayors ditched the Lakas-CMD and transferred to the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), the President's party, saying the national leadership of Lakas failed to consult them on party decisions.

She said local Lakas members were not consulted when party leaders accepted the membership of Bulacan Rep. Pedro Pancho, a member of the opposition Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

"We were surprised by the decision," De la Cruz said. "We were promised that our voices would be heard [in Lakas]."

It was a different situation in Kampi, where, she said, she and the others were given due courtesy. "Kampi practices participatory decision-making," the governor said.

Kampi president Camarines Sur Rep.

CEBU/ A22

GMA tantrum unwillingness to hear truth

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE CELEBRATED TEMPER OF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo again grabbed front-page prominence last week when she rudely walked out on a press interview over questions that irritated her. It is not terribly important that the victim of her latest outburst is an INQUIRER reporter. The object of her wrath could have been any reporter from another newspaper or radio or TV station.

Ms Arroyo's flare-ups are not big news any more. They are not unknown to those who have dealt with her—not least, her Cabinet members, political associates and senior bureaucrats, many of whom she has publicly humiliated and intimidated for telling her what she loathes to hear. The press should not be intimidated by these temperamental outbursts.

Rather, Ms Arroyo should be worried about her unruly explosions. The media can cope with these, having successfully weathered more dangerous threats to

GMA TANTRUM/ A23

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(All in exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered light rains. Eastern and Southern Mindanao will be mostly cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with rainshowers.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/11/07 SOURCE PAGASA

I'll make noise, UN prober vows

By DJ Yap, Nikko Dizon and Miko L. Morelos

THE MESSAGE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings and summary executions was unequivocal.

"If anything happens to you, I'll make a lot of noise," he told a roomful of victims of human rights abuses and their families.

On his first order of business after arriving in Manila Saturday, UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston assured activists of his unqualified attention.

Yesterday, he engaged in a dialogue with leaders and members of the Citizens' Council for Human Rights and Karapatan, as well as human rights victims and their families, at an undisclosed location in Metro Manila.

"Alston told us that if anything happens to any of the participants in his investigation, he'll make plenty of noise," said Belinda Formanes, executive director of the Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services.

She said the objective of the meeting was to present to Alston "general questions" about the government response to political killings, as well as specific cases of human rights abuses.

"For the most part, he just listened. He seemed really focused, and we were able to present our cases smoothly," she said in Filipino.

Two sessions

Two sessions were scheduled yesterday afternoon, each involving at least 40 individuals, including victims of human rights abuses and their families, said Formanes, who attended the first session at 3:20 p.m.

She declined to provide details about the other participants at the meeting, as well as the venue. "There were concerns about the security of the victims," she said, when asked the reason for the secrecy.

"Many of them did not even participate in the investigations of the Melo Commission and Task Force Usig because there was general distrust of these bodies," she told the INQUIRER.

President Macapagal-Arroyo formed the Melo Commission in August 2006 to investigate the killings. It recommended in January that retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and other commanders, citing command responsibility, be held responsible for the extrajudicial killings in their respective areas during their tours of duty.

At one of the sessions, the same groups gave their "full participation" to Alston's visit in the hope that his findings would pressure the government into action, Formanes said.

10-day trip

She said two other meetings with human rights victims in Baguio and Davao were part of Alston's itinerary.

He is also expected to meet with government officials, members of civil society and police agencies in the course of his 10-day trip, Formanes said.

"From there on, he will make an independent assessment and recommendation," she said.

Human Rights Commissioner Wilhelm Soriano said Alston would also visit the Commission on Human Rights on Feb. 18 and 19.

Validate allegations

"His main objective is to validate the allegations of political killings in the country. What we intend to do is present our own investigation and findings," Soriano told the INQUIRER.

Bobby Garcia, coordination specialist of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, told the INQUIRER that the UN team would do its best to get the sides of both the aggrieved sectors and the agencies being blamed for the killings.

Alston came upon the invitation of the Arroyo administration, following calls from the international community, particularly the European Union, to address the unabated political killings in the country.

The activist group, Bayan Muna, and human rights organization, Karapatan, have filed complaints against the administration on the spate of extrajudicial killings before the UN Special Rapporteur in Geneva.

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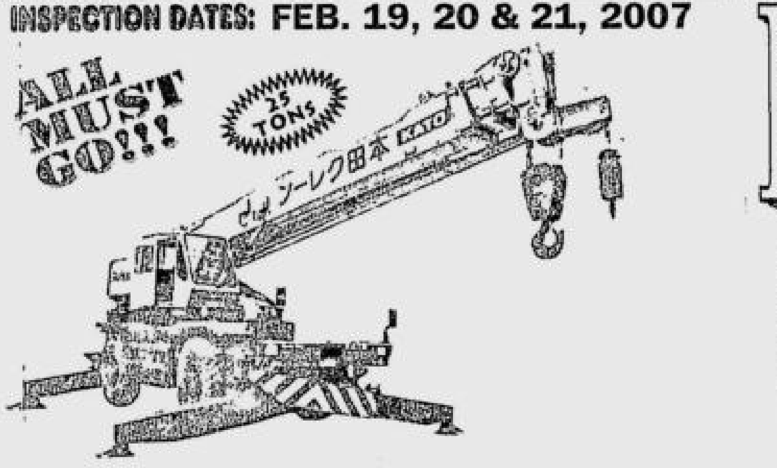

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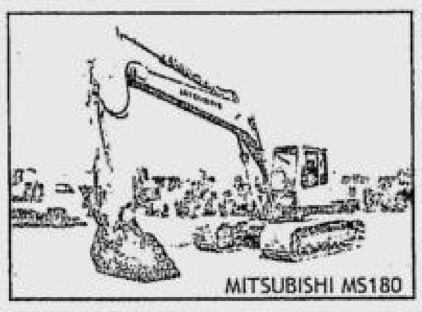

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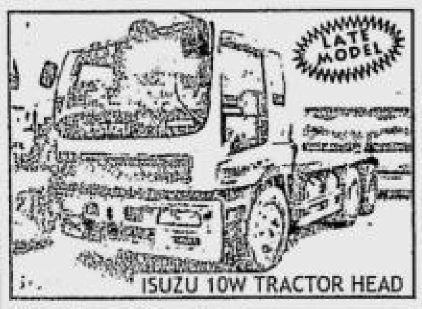

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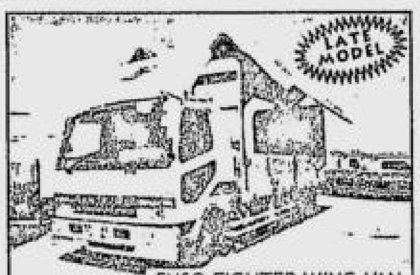

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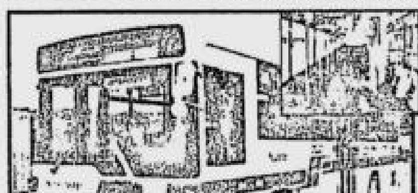

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Army opens poll offensive vs leftist party-list bets

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—THE ARMY LAUNCHED ITS first electoral offensive against leftist party-list groups joining the electoral contest in May after the commander of the counterinsurgency operations in the two Camarines provinces claimed the groups were being supported by the New People's Army.

Brig. Gen. Nestor Sadiarin, commanding officer of the 402nd Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army, identified the NPA-supported party-list groups as Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Anakpawis, New Kabataan (Anakbayan) and Saura—citing documents allegedly confiscated from NPA rebels.

Sadiarin reiterated that the leftist party-list groups were communist fronts and that communist rebels aimed to win more seats in the May elections to strengthen their forces and increase their technological capability.

In earlier statements, the leftist party-list groups had denounced the branding of their organizations as communist fronts because, they said, this justified the continuing extrajudicial killings of their ranks by unidentified death squads.

Hundreds of leftist activists have been killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took power in 2001, prompting international denunciation of the political killings and the creation of the Melo Commission that investigated the killings of journalists and activists.

Party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo has claimed that the death squads that preyed on members and officers of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and party-list groups Anakpawis, Gabriela and Anakbayan were linked to the military's counterinsurgency program "Oplan Laya."

Ocampo said the continuing political killings were designed to immobilize the allied leftist party-list groups with the aim of defeating them in the coming electoral race.

Bayan Muna has three representatives in Congress, Anakpawis has two while Gabriela Women's Party has one. They have consistently won seats in Congress since the 2001 elections.

Sadiarin claimed the victory of the leftist party-list groups would mean more arms and computers for NPA rebels.

He said the NPA rebels were also making use of the infrastructure projects of the leftist party-list representatives.

Sadiarin claimed that NPA rebels were collecting hundreds of thousands of pesos from local and national bets for "permits to campaign (PTC)" that would give the poll bets access to areas controlled by the communist rebels.

He said the NPA rebels collect P300,000-P500,000 from gubernatorial and congressional aspirants and between P100,000 to P300,000 from mayoralty bets.

Sadiarin said senatorial and national candidates were separate fund sources of PTC fees of NPA rebels.

He revealed that Army intelligence got hold of a list of personalities from whom the NPA rebels had demanded payments of PTC fees in the 2001 and 2004 elections. But he declined to name them.

Leave politics out of session—Bunye

MALACAÑANG HAS REITERATED THE need for Congress to push ahead with the two-day special session it had called amid opposition from some lawmakers.

"Let us not politicize the calling of the special session," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said of the Feb. 19-20 special session called by President Macapagal-Arroyo last week.

Bunye said the bills that the Palace wanted passed were vital.

Among the measures is the antiterror bill, which Ms Arroyo said would give her administration more teeth in fighting terrorism.

The proposed antiterror law only needs the ratification of the House after it failed to muster a quorum on the last day of sessions.

Congress adjourned last week for the May polls.

Bunye said the measures would be wasted if a special session were not held.

"Collective and willful action in ratifying these bills will lend impetus to fighting terror and poverty, protecting the environment and serving the people," he said.

Bunye said the people wanted to see all institutions of the government row the boat in one direction. "We wish that statesmanship, rather than brinkmanship, will prevail," he said.

Christine O. Avendaño

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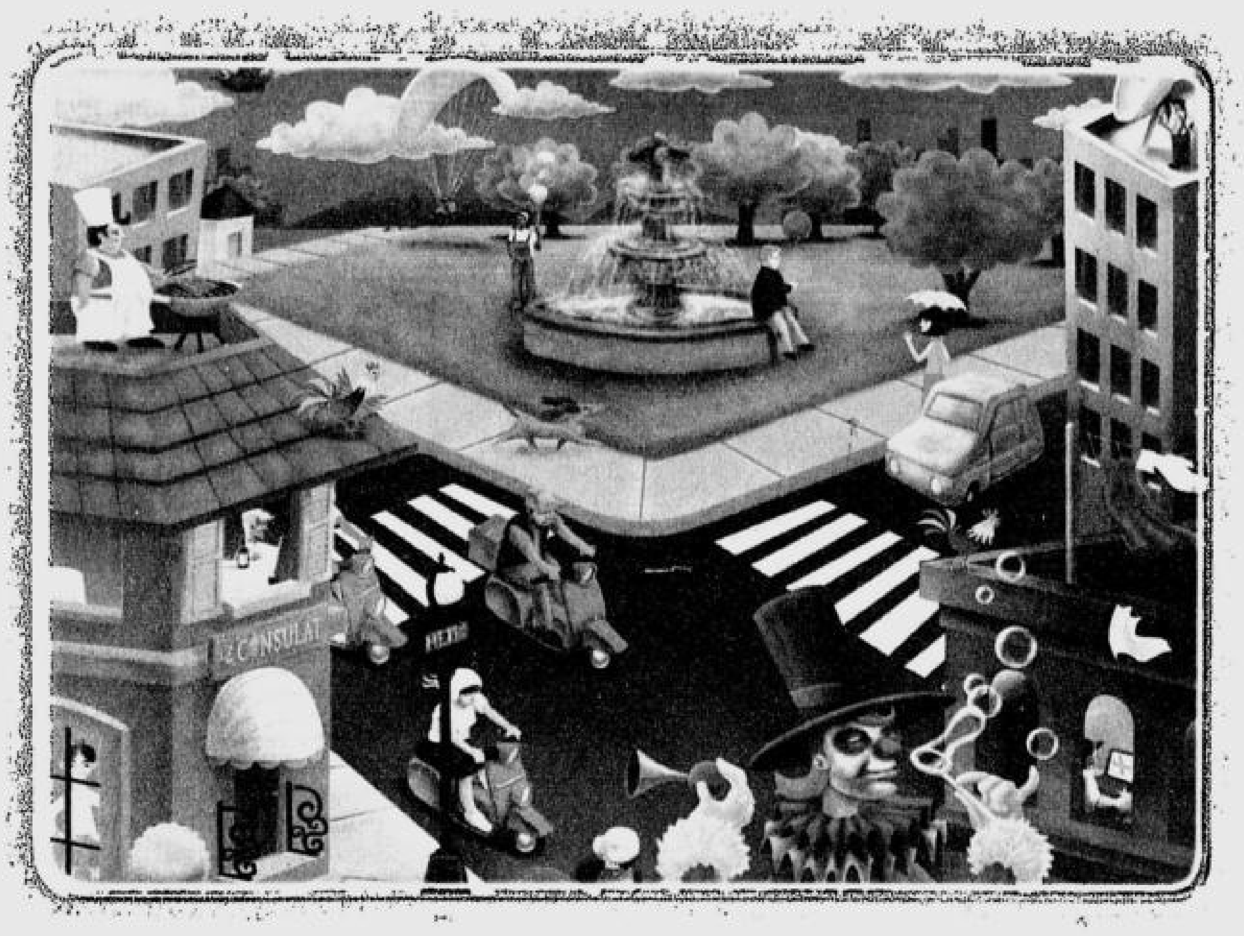

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

Goodbye Lipo, Hello Ultrashape!

Ultrashape – Lipo Without The Suction continues to make waves in the slimming industry since its official launch in Manila early last year. Tagged as the first non-invasive breakthrough in body contouring, Ultrashape uses an ultrasound beam to breakdown and liquefy fats from outside the body. Promising an average reduction of about 2cm in just one treatment, it effectively reduces fat deposits on multiple body areas such as the tummy, flanks and thighs.

A small amount of fat reduction is just not worth undergoing surgery for. Liposuction usually involves massive body contouring, and is often not recommended when only a few inches of fat have to be removed. Thus, for the majority of people who only need a few touch-ups, Ultrashape offers a much safer alternative. It gives the benefits of liposuction without the risks or side effects, surgical scars and downtime. The result: Smooth, even and shapely curves you can flaunt even without your clothes on!

Due to its increasing popularity, demand for Ultrashape is high often resulting to fully booked appointment schedules from its growing roster of clients. These women have testified – they have finally found the best alternative to liposuction!

Dawn Zulueta–Lagdameo, 37

"When Ultrashape was offered to me, I was excited! Ultrashape concentrates on that last hard-to-lose fat that remains in your body even after you've lost weight. I told myself, at last, there was a chance to lose all that stubborn fat that just wouldn't seem to go away. The doctor explained that Ultrashape destroys the fat cells in the targeted areas like my stomach and thighs. From there, the fat is metabolized and burned naturally by my body as energy. The treatment takes an hour and a half and is done once a month.

Ultrashape is really the perfect finishing touch for people like me who have lost weight but still have some lumps and bumps. After my first treatment, I immediately said to myself 'wow, it's perfect!' Ultrashape definitely has all the benefits of lipo minus the surgery and all the risks! There's no downtime whatsoever. So you see, liposuction is unnecessary."

Lyn Ching–Pascual, 34

"What intrigued me about Ultrashape is the claim – the easy treatment you can have in your lunch break. Apart from that, a friend of mine said that her friend tried Ultrashape as soon as it came out in the market. And she immediately lost 2 inches in just one month! Ultrashape promises an average of about 2cm, that's true, but it's also possible for someone to lose even more than that too. That's why for me, even if liposuction was the only weight-loss treatment available, I'd rather walk up a building 100 times than have an operation because I don't want the possibility of dying for vanity.

With Ultrashape around, everyone now gets a better slimming option. Since it's non-invasive, I've got nothing to worry about. After trying it firsthand, I was like 'is this real?!' I just walked in, got the treatment and after an hour, I was on my way back to work again! It's as if nothing happened. The best part was, I could feel my tummy flatten only after a few weeks! No doubt it's the perfect way to trim down excess fats!"

Cristina Gonzalez–Romualdez, 42

"Nothing really compares to Ultrashape. When I tried it, I immediately lost 4cm in my tummy after only 1 session! Imagine what a couple of sessions more can do! Diet pills and crash dieting don't work for me. With my catering and events business, I can't just turn my back from tasting and savoring my own menus. More so, if it's lipo we're going to compare Ultrashape with, lipo doesn't even come close to it as far as safety is concerned. Besides, with Ultrashape around, why would anyone still want to settle for liposuction?! I must be very desperate or I must be so fat that I could no longer move before I'd consider getting it done. I just find it too dangerous!"

Undeniably, Marie France's Ultrashape is solid proof that the trends in slimming now slant towards the approach that's safer yet as effective. After going through a weight-loss program, it is highly recommended to continue with Ultrashape treatments right after. It's the best final touch-up in getting rid of remaining stubborn fats in the body. For booking schedules, call Marie France now at 894-BODY (2639).

ADVT

Villar raps order barring Erap visitors

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL VILLAR JR. yesterday decried the police move to prevent him and his wife from entering ousted President Joseph Estrada's estate in Tanay, Rizal last Saturday.

Policemen guarding Estrada shooed away Villar and his wife, Rep. Cynthia Villar, when they attempted to meet with Estrada, giving as an excuse an alleged plot of communist rebels to kill the latter.

"This is a disrespect to the Senate presidency," Villar told reporters in a briefing where he and Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan announced that they were running as independents in the May 14 senatorial elections.

"I admit I visited the former president, and they did not allow me in. This is proof that the administration continues to trample on the Senate," he said, expressing the belief that the order to bar him had come from Malacañang.

Palace ruse

Villar and his wife had planned to meet with Estrada at the Tanay resthouse where the latter is detained on plunder charges to discuss the political plans of the Senate Wednesday Group. The group counts him and Pangilinan as members, together with Senators Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. claimed the alleged slay plot against Estrada was a ruse employed by Malacañang to keep Estrada from meeting with opposition leaders and firming up crucial political alignments in the runup to the midterm elections.

The Estrada-led United Opposition (UNO) coalition has included Villar and Pangilinan in its Senate ticket.

Pimentel said the move was prompted by the administration's desperation in seeking to offset the political influence of Estrada, whose endorsement politicians continue to seek. He added that the public would see through the ruse.

Pimentel said the senatorial aspirants identified with Ms Arroyo had been getting lukewarm response from the people because the public distrusted the President's leadership.

Overboard

The police contingent assigned to guard Estrada in Tanay said only immediate members of his family and his lawyers were allowed to visit him.

But Pimentel said the Philippine National Police had gone overboard in tightening security for Estrada, noting that they had prohibited him from using his mobile phone, thereby denying him a way to freely communicate with his associates.

"Obviously, the overly strict security measures being enforced by the police due to an alleged assassination threat are nothing more than a disguise to cripple his movements and to render him useless in providing leadership and guidance to the opposition at this crucial stage of the electoral battle," Pimentel said.

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Witnesses: Barbers started altercation

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Two witnesses, including a barangay official, have given statements to the police contradicting the claim of Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) General Manager Robert Dean Barbers that he was the target of a failed kidnapping attempt in Bauan, Batangas, late Friday morning.

They (the witnesses) are saying the incident might not have been a foiled kidnapping, but a traffic altercation, said a police official contacted by the INQUIRER.

"*Siguro nagkabarakuhan lang sila ni Barbers.* (Maybe it was a clash of macho egos), added the official who requested that his name be withheld.

Barbers had reported that a car with four men on board blocked his Ford Explorer while he was driving with his family through Bauan, Batangas, but backed off when the incident attracted the attention of a local media man.

Philippine National Police Chief Director General Oscar Calderon immediately ordered a probe of the incident and the arrest of the two main suspects—policeman Jun Virtusio and an Air Force enlisted man identified as Gerry Mendoza. The two others are still at large.

In a statement to the San Jose Municipal Police Office, a copy of which was shown to the INQUIRER, witness Armando Asi said it was Barber's Ford Explorer that blocked the path of a black Ford Laser which had stopped along the provincial road at around 11 a.m. in Barangay Lalayak, San Jose, Batangas.

A gun-wielding man, who later turned out to be Barbers, purportedly alighted from the sport utility vehicle and approached the driver's side of the black car. The driver, whom Asi identified as Niño Virtusio, an active member of the Philippine Air Force, also got off his vehicle and supposedly engaged Barbers in a brief verbal altercation.

Asi, a council member of the barangay where Virtusio's father is the barangay captain, said Barbers poked his gun at Virtusio and punched him, hitting the PAF man in the back of the head. The tourism official then immediately got back into his vehicle and sped off toward Bauan town.

Another witness, Pedro Punio, gave a similar account of the event and supported the claim of Asi, saying it was Barbers who hit Virtusio after a verbal tussle.

Reached through his mobile phone, Barbers brushed off the statements of the two witnesses, saying "That's expected. They will try anything just to escape criminal liabilities."

Barbers, though, admitted that an incident happened in San Jose a few minutes before the four armed men "tried to abduct him."

He said he was traversing the provincial road in San Jose to take a shortcut to a beach resort in Mabini town when he noticed that a Ford Laser was traveling slowly in front of his SUV. He turned on the headlights of his vehicle to signal to the car's driver that he would overtake. But instead of giving way, the car blocked his path whenever he tried to overtake it.

Barbers said that before he could maneuver his vehicle, the car stopped and blocked the road. Two armed men got off the car and ordered him to get out of his vehicle.

He said he pleaded with the suspects and asked them to take him instead and spare his family.

Barbers said he eventually got a chance to get back to his SUV and drive away towards Bauan town.

The suspects then chased Barbers on board another vehicle, a Mitsubishi Adventure, and cut into his path in Bauan town. That was when at least four armed men alighted from the vehicle and ordered him and his family to get off their SUV.

At this point, a man who introduced himself as Ben Aclan, a journalist, appeared and asked the armed men what was happening. Aclan took a video of the incident on his mobile phone.

In a separate mobile phone conversation, Aclan backed Barbers' assertions. *With Alcuin Papa*

German strips at Naia

A GERMAN TOURIST STRIPPED TO HIS UNderwear yesterday after airport personnel asked him to go through the X-ray security gate twice at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1.

Airport officials identified the unusually accommodating man as 66-year-old Hans Jurgen Oskar von Naguschewski.

"He must have been annoyed that he was asked to walk through the X-ray twice so he took off his pants," said retired Gen. Angel Atutubo, security chief of the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa).

Atutubo said the incident took place at around 9 p.m. at the Naia's final security check.

The alarm sounded after the German walked through the X-ray gate, prompting security officers to ask him to repeat the procedure as well as divest himself of metal items that could have triggered the alarm.

To their surprise, the man took off his pants and walked through the X-ray again.

"He actually didn't say much, unlike Filipino passengers who would talk a lot. He was clearly irked and he showed it by disrobing," said Supt. Atilano Morada, police Aviation Security Group (ASG) chief.

Atutubo said that there was no excuse for the German's behavior.

The passenger found himself haled to the police station, where authorities charged him with acts of lasciviousness. *Nikko Dizon*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 12, 2007
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 4:1-15, 25
Gospel: Mark 8:11-13

The Pharisees came and started to argue with Jesus. Hoping to embarrass him, they asked for some heavenly sign. Then his spirit was moved. He gave a deep sigh and said, "Why do the people of this present time ask for a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this people." Then he left them, got into the boat again and went to the other side of the lake.

Commentary

Cain and Abel are born. One is righteous and the other resentful. God speaks to Cain and warns him. But Cain kills Abel. And God will not allow anyone to kill Cain so he is marked and sent to roam earth. This is the first sin of human beings: Murdering one's own family/brother. All other sins are seen in the light or shadow of the result of knowing good and evil.

The Pharisees (Church people) argue with Jesus, asking him for a sign. Jesus sighs from the depths of his being—there is sin in those who claim to be religious and in all people who kill others' bodies, spirits, and souls. And Jesus declares adamantly, "No sign will be given." Do we argue with Jesus, testing him, wanting signs? Or do we simply obey his word? Do we cause Jesus to sigh from the depths of his being?

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References: 1 Department of Health. Health Statistics. Ten Leading Causes of Mortality by Sex, Number, Rate/100,000 Population and Percentage, Philippines 2003. Available at: www.doh.gov.ph. Accessed 29 January 2007.
2 Laudico, AV, et al. 2005 Philippine Cancer Facts and Estimates. Philippine Cancer Society, Inc. 2004.

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Gun ban nets 315 arms, 182 persons

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE HAVE SO far confiscated a total of 315 loose firearms and arrested 182 persons caught violating the gun ban which took effect last month as part of the government's campaign to keep the coming May elections peaceful.

The firearms netted so far at Philippine National Police checkpoints nationwide comprised 221 short firearms and 94 high-powered guns.

There are an estimated 100,000 loose firearms around the country.

The PNP has organized Task Force HOPE (Honest, Orderly and Peace Elections) to maintain the peace in the coming elections.

Region 4-A—composed of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon—tallied the most number of recovered firearms and the most number of persons arrested for carrying unlicensed guns. Police in the region recovered 77 illegal firearms and arrested 82 persons.

The National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) came in a distant second with only 29 loose guns confiscated and 47 persons arrested.

Western Visayas police seized some 28 guns and arrested 29 persons.

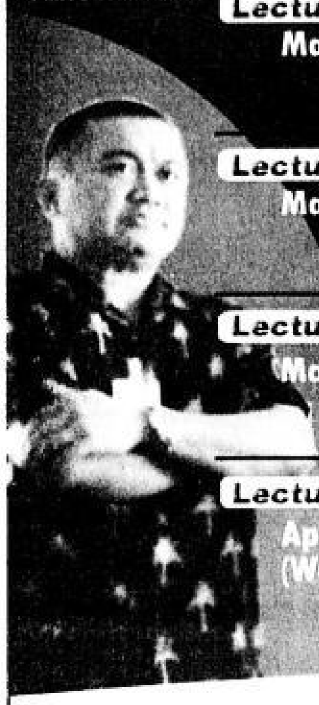
In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which the PNP had said had the biggest number of partisan armed groups, only 24 illegal guns were seized and 24 unauthorized gun holders were arrested. However, 17 of the illegal guns seized were high-powered ones.

The Commission on Elections declared a gun ban starting early last month, signaling the start of the election period.

Anyone who wants to carry a gun will have to get the necessary permit from the Comelec.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) reported the arrest of 43-year-old businessman Benedict Guinto for possession of six guns and various ammunition.

CIDG operatives raided Guinto's house in Golden City Subdivision in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, by virtue of a search warrant issued by an Imus, Cavite, judge. Guinto was placed under arrest and has been charged with illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.



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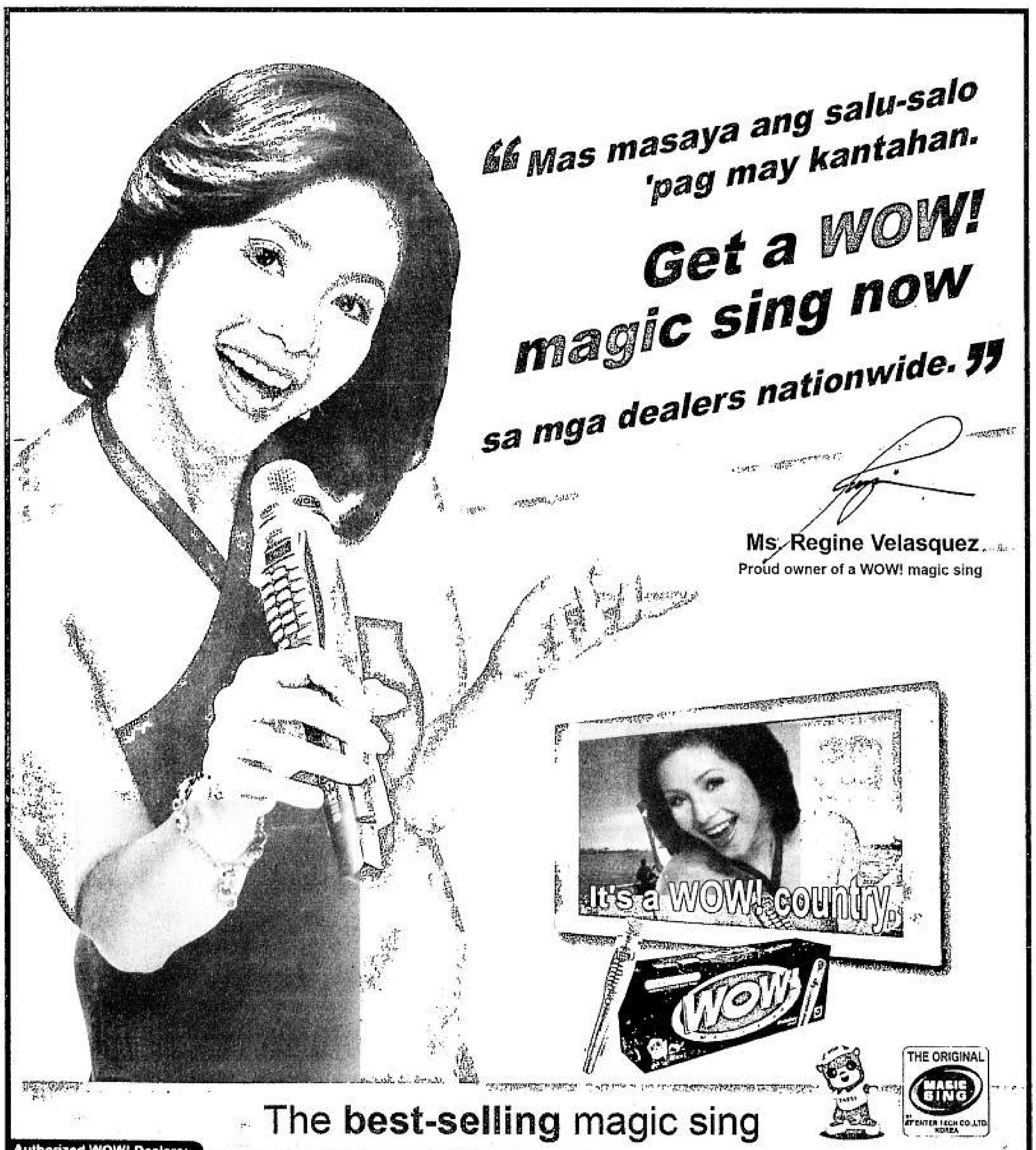

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NPA guerrillas turn selves in hoping for better lives

By Nikko Dizon and Tarra Quismundo

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE, Pampanga—The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it had scored a major victory against the Communist Party of the Philippines, following the surrender of 12 members of its armedwing, the New People's Army, based in Quezon.

"This is a major setback to the communist terrorists who continue to deceive and terrorize Filipino citizens with their acts of extortion and consequent criminal activities," said AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, in a message read by Air Force commanding general Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino.

Simple ceremonies marked the official return of the 12 NPA guerrillas—some of them female fighters—to the government fold here on Saturday.

Tolentino presided over the former rebels' taking of an oath of allegiance to the government.

The group surrendered in three batches since December last year to the Philippine Air Force 730th Combat Group under the 710th Special Operations Wing.

The 730th is the Air Force unit of the Southern Luzon Command based in Quezon.

"We surrendered to reform our lives, to take care of our families. We do not want to be part of the fight anymore. We want to be legitimate citizens who want to live quiet lives," said *Ka* Dennis in Filipino, speaking for the group of surrenderees, whose identities were undisclosed for security reasons.

The former rebels surrendered their rifles and pistols, grenades and ammunition, and materials to create IEDs (improvised explosives devices). They also turned in propaganda materials and a CPP-NPA flag.

"We have turned over our arms, and we did that as proof that we can no longer return to the communist party. Once we return to the mountains, they will kill us for sure ... And this is our guarantee that we are already with the government, that we want to live decently and quietly," *Ka* Dennis said in a brief interview with reporters.

Lt. Col. Manuel Gonzales, the combat group's commander, said the surrenderees included leaders from the Quezon-based Guerilla Front Command (GCF), 41 of the NPA's Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee.

Tolentino said more rebels were expected to turn their backs on the communist party because of ongoing talks, pursued by military negotiators as part of the government's all-out antiinsurgency campaign.

"We have a program ... that's responsible for enlightening these people ... to convince them that the life they are living is not the life they're supposed to have. There's a better life with the government," he said in a press briefing.

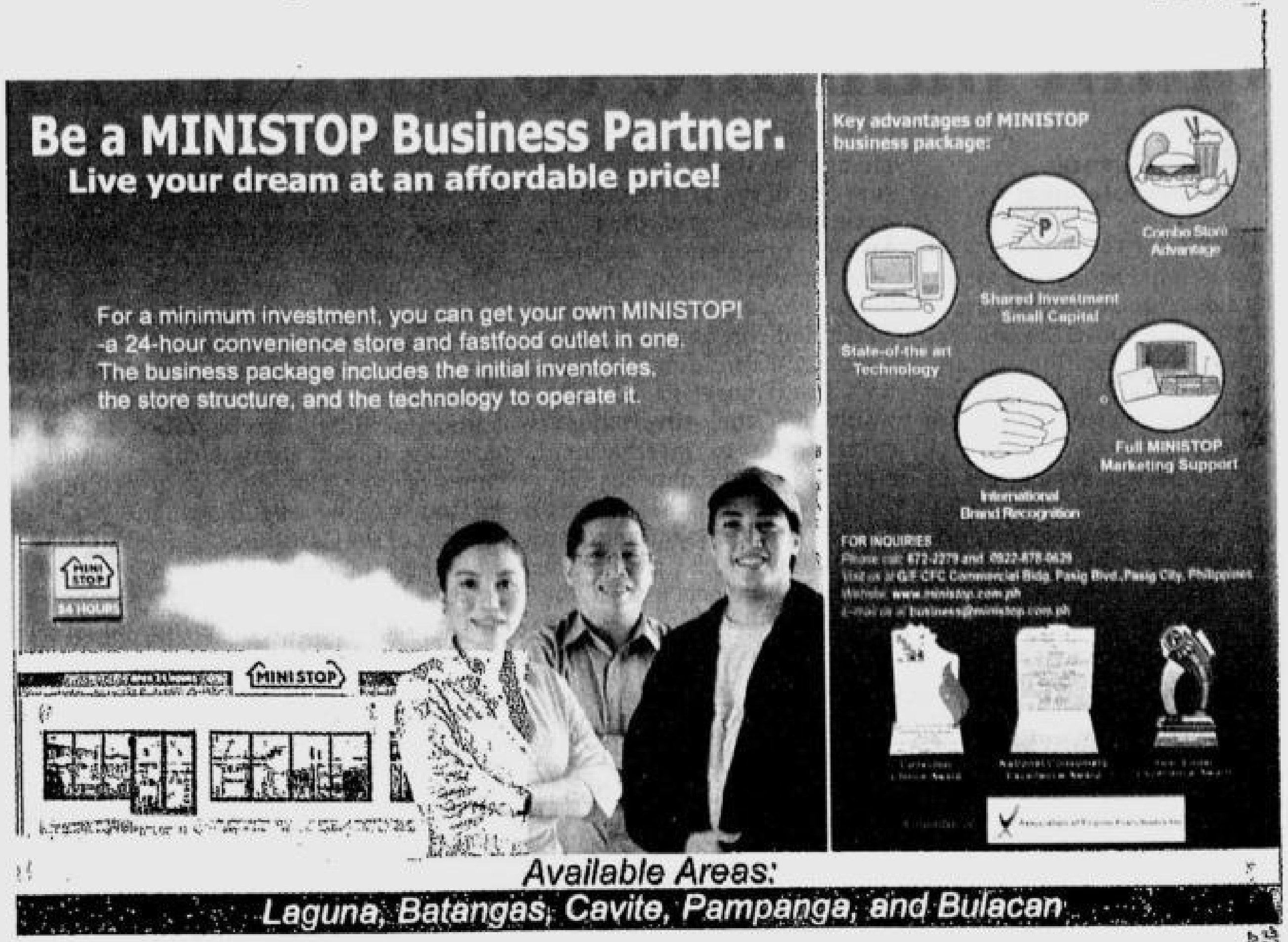
Tolentino said the military had "certain economic programs" that would help surrenderees be "assimilated in their new lives."

He also vowed to give protection to the former rebels, aware that the NPA might be out to get them.

"There's really no guarantee, but we are doing our best to protect them—wherever they are going. But the places they will go are friendly areas, so we believe nothing bad will happen to them," Tolentino said.

Ka Dennis hoped the military would deliver on this promise and more.

He said: "We hope that as surrenderees, the government will give our families a livelihood."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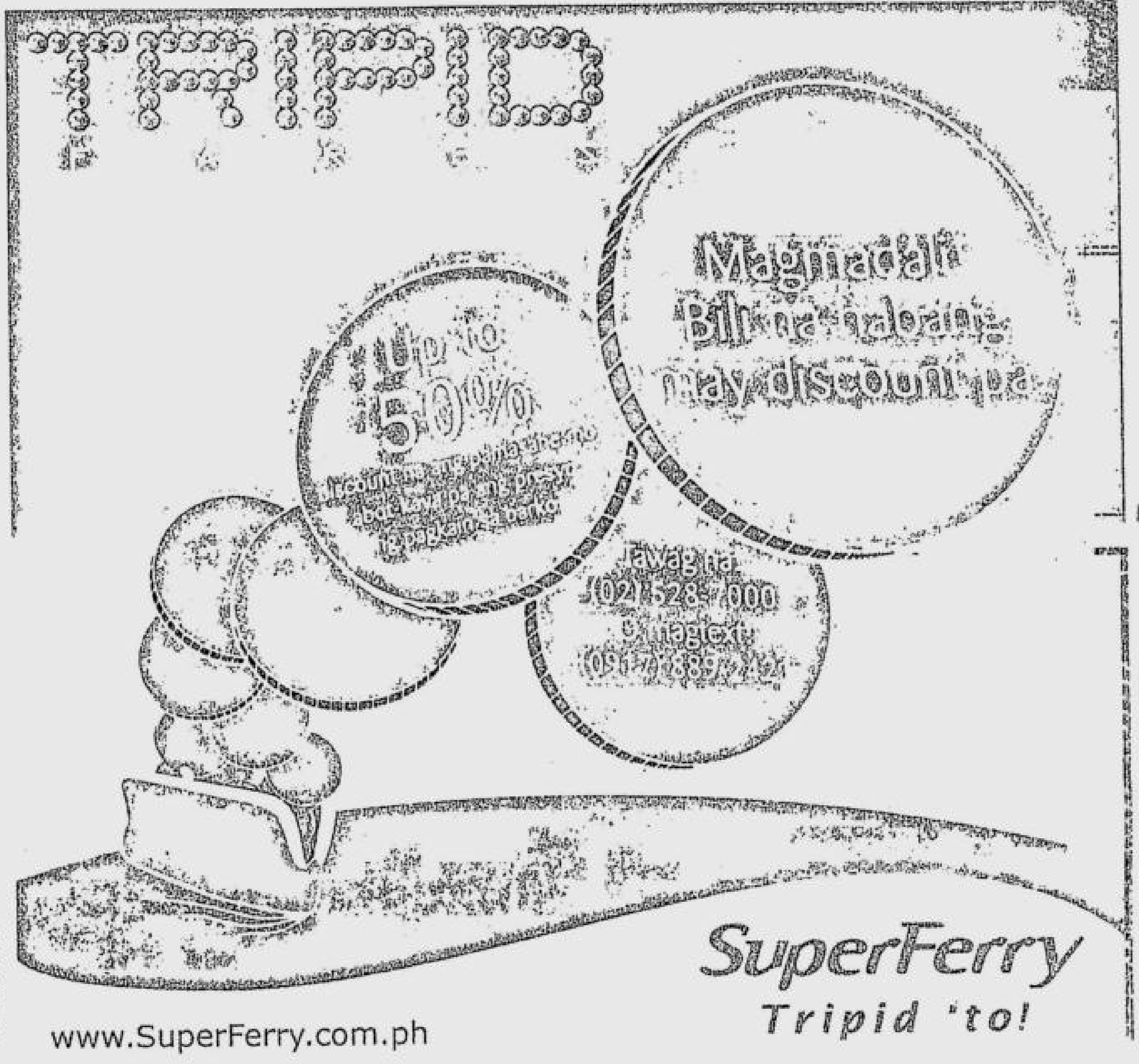
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Leviste lawyers to seek new judge

ACCUSING THE PRESIDING judge as biased, lawyers of Antonio Leviste today will fight to transfer the former Batangas governor's controversial murder case to another court against a tough challenge from a prosecutor.

A fierce face-off is expected to unreel today at the sala of Makati Judge Elmo Alameda, with opposing lawyers arguing their positions on a motion seeking to inhibit the judge.

Alameda is hearing the criminal case against Leviste, lodged against him for the fatal shooting of his trusted aide, Rafael de las Alas, on Jan. 12.

"There's going to be a hearing on our motion for inhibition. It depends on the judge ... But it's obvious that he's going to deny it because he does not want to let go of the case. He likes the media mileage," said Leviste's lawyer, Henry Capela.

State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, who had moved to have the charge against Leviste upgraded from homicide to murder, promised to strongly argue in favor of the judge.

"I am opposing the motion to inhibit the judge not principally to defend the judge, whose decisions in the cases he has heard are the best proof of his unquestionable integrity, but primarily for an effective and efficient criminal justice system," said Velasco.

In seeking to recuse Alameda, Leviste's lawyers claimed the judge was inclined toward the prosecution because he had approved the request of the family of De las Alas that the Department of Justice review the case.

The victim's family had asked for a reinvestigation, contending that Leviste should face the heavier offense of murder and not homicide. *Tarra Quismundo*

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Plant bamboo to save RP forests, export to China

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—A LOCAL foundation has been promoting the large-scale planting of bamboo to boost the government's reforestation efforts and to produce a resource which the country can sell to China.

Edgar Manda, former general manager of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, has been touring the country with members of the Philippine Bamboo Foundation promoting bamboo as a way to revive denuded Philippine forests.

Recent news about climate change has made bamboo culture one of the priorities of the government, according to Manda, presidential assistant for Southern Tagalog.

The world's scientists have confirmed the onset of global warming. Rebuilding the country's forest cover in 10 years would be the government's contribution to international efforts to curb climate change.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 53 percent or 15.88 million hectares of the country's 30-million-ha land mass is classified as forest land.

Some 1.4-million-ha of forests in the Cordillera are undisturbed, although mining and logging activities have taken their toll on most of the region's forest cover.

The country, however, will need to be convinced to go into large-scale bamboo farming.

Minor role

Rogelio Bibal, a Baguio-based artist, said bamboo continues to play a minor role in the the farming and hunting cultures of the Cordillera.

Bibal presented a paper on the Cordillera's bamboo culture in Zhejiang, China, during an international training workshop last year on bamboo industrial processing technologies.

He said bamboo was used to fashion *kayabang* (vegetable baskets), a favorite implement among Benguet farmers. There was no evidence, however, that the region cultivated bamboo to produce weapons or other industrial products.

He noted that Abra was the only region where bamboo was considered prominent in its culture.

Grass, not tree

Bibal said bamboo was not technically a tree but a species of tree-like grass that matures within four years.

Manda, who was at the Zhejiang workshop with Bibal, said China's bamboo supply would need replenishing in five years and it would start importing the product from the Philippines.

In his report, Bibal said: "China is the biggest bamboo producer of the world ... and the center of world bamboo diversity with 500 different bamboo species."

He quoted Chinese experts as telling workshop participants that China had experienced massive forest denudation and started a massive and successful reforestation program in 1979 using bamboo.

China's experience proved that bamboo cultivation, when harnessed well, could "unlock the solution to poverty ... and environmental [instability]," Bibal said in his report.

Big bamboo

According to Manda, China's annual bamboo production "exceeds eight million tons, [which is] equivalent to eight million cubic meters of wood."

He said this enabled China to export $95 billion (P4.58 trillion) worth of byproducts in 2005 and its bamboo industry is now worth $6.3 billion (P304 billion).

Because world demand for the resource has exceeded China's supply, it will soon have to start importing bamboo from its Asian neighbors.

Manda has been meeting with local officials to convince them to invest in bamboo, but he is focusing his efforts on Benguet and Mt. Province because of the areas' cooler climate.

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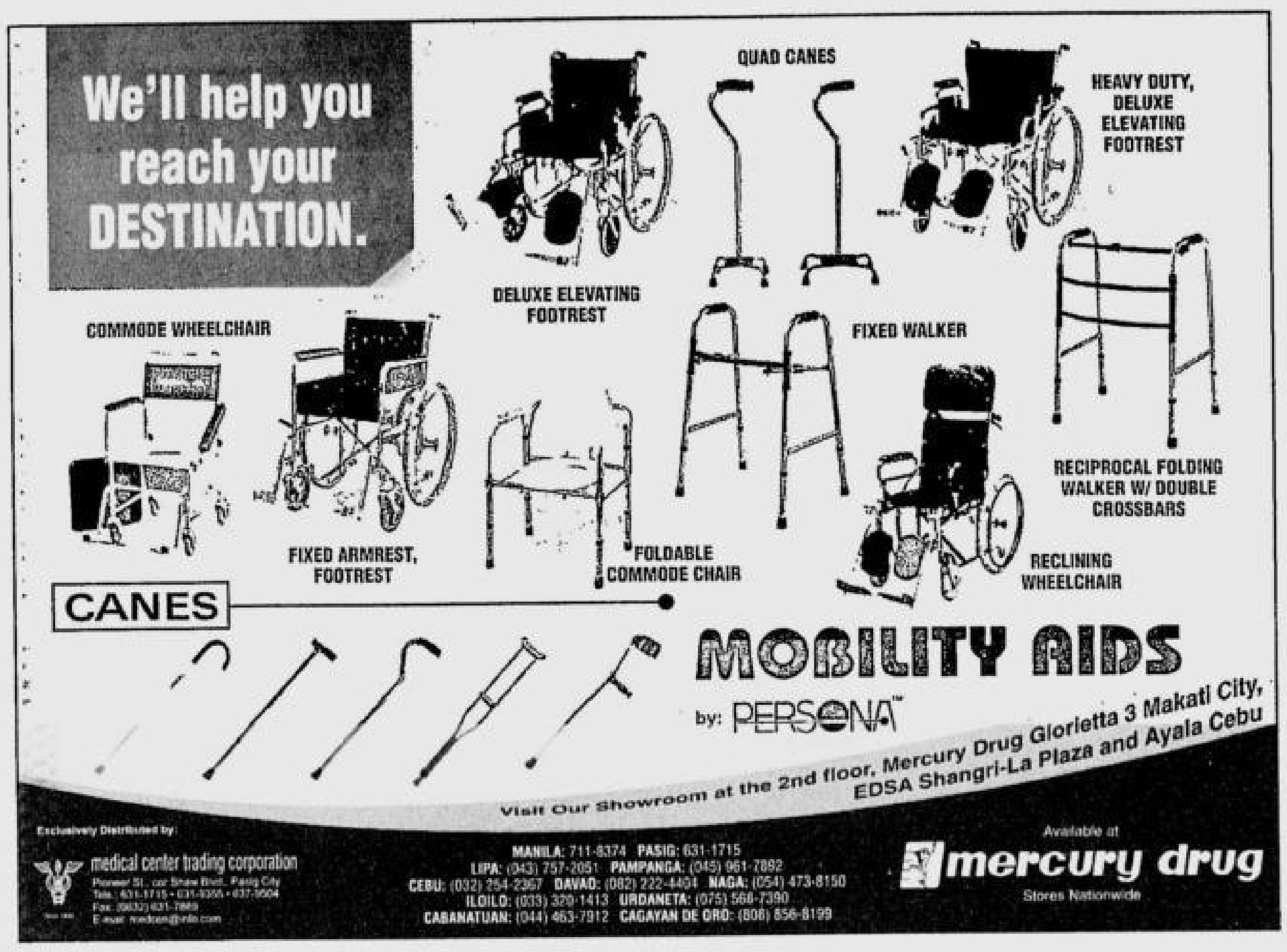

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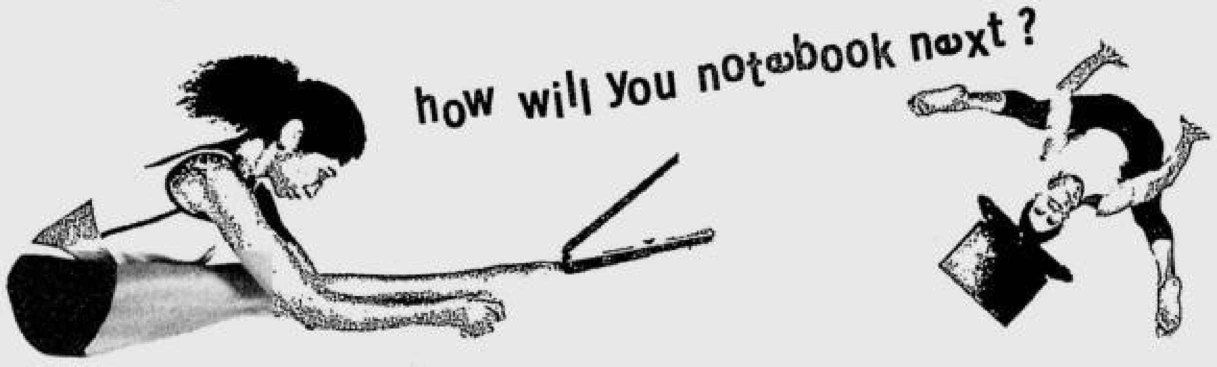
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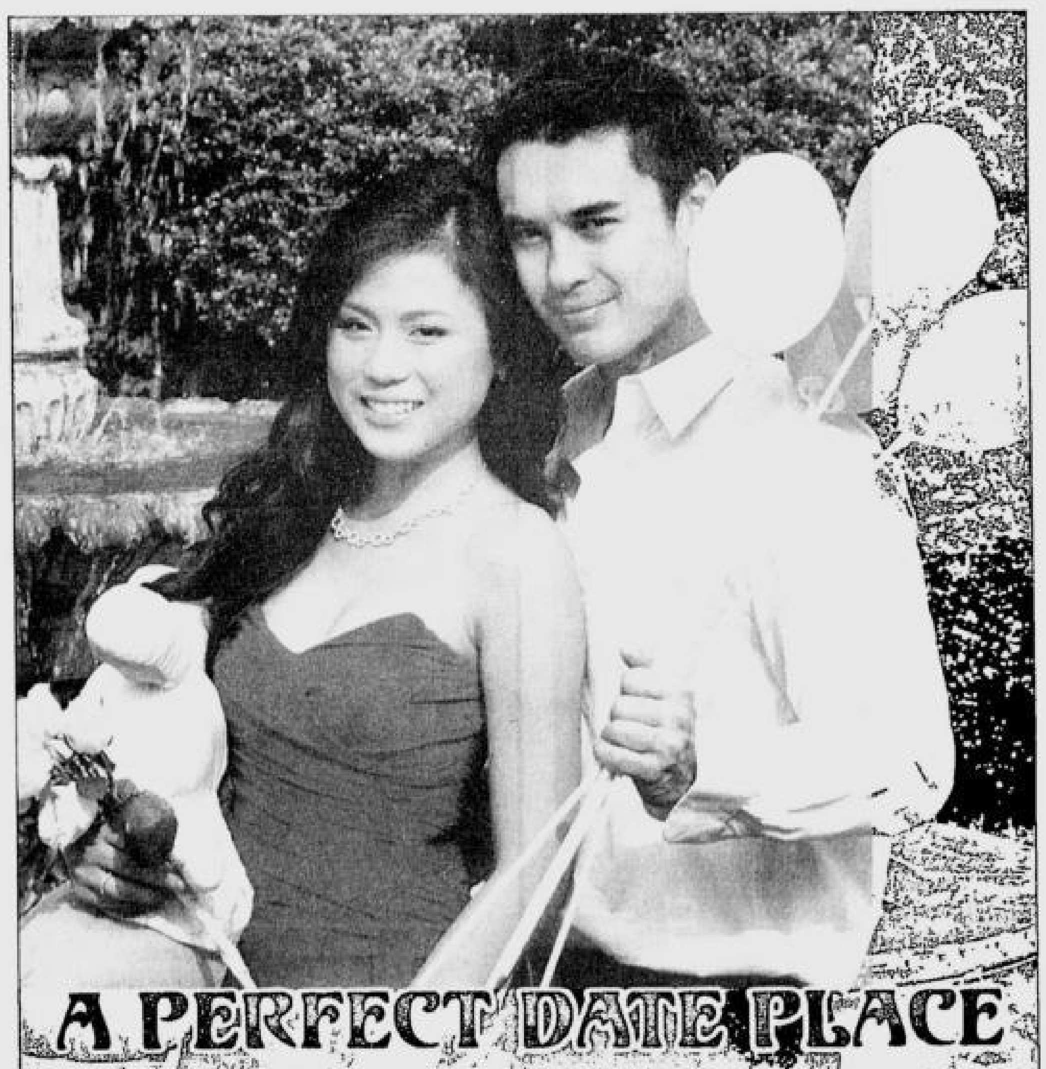

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Kin of slain lawmaker reject claim NPA killed him

By Alcuin Papa

THE FAMILY OF SLAIN ABRA REP. Luis Bersamin Jr. rejected yesterday the possibility that the communist New People's Army was involved in the murder of the congressman last December.

Court of Appeals Justice Lucas Bersamin, brother of the slain congressman, was reacting to reports that Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had instructed the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to investigate if communist rebels had ordered the killing of Bersamin.

"The family does not believe this. Developments in the investigation definitely exclude communist rebels," Justice Bersamin told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He said there was an "unseen hand feeding the justice department information to mislead the investigation."

He added that it was impossible that communist rebels were involved since none of the suspects were affiliated with the communist movement.

"[Rufino] Panday is a former soldier. We know the suspects are not rebels. They are common criminals. These developments do not point to the NPA," Bersamin said.

Panday was arrested a few days after the congressman was shot outside Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City, on Dec. 16, 2006.

Panday said that Freddie Dupo, one of the suspects, had told him that Abra Gov. Vicente Valera had allegedly put up a P5-million price on Bersamin's head.

Last month, Panday recanted his statement.

Justice Bersamin said the information on the NPA involvement could have come from reports that the late congressman had a fight with Bayan Muna Abra coordinator Alberto Teredano, who was also killed last year.

"But there was no conflict between my brother and Teredano," Justice Bersamin said.

He added that he talked to Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo who confirmed that there had been no conflict between the two.

"Ocampo even said that if there was anything his group could do to help the investigation, all I had to do was ask," Bersamin said.

He noted that Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Ma. Sison also issued a statement denying that communist rebels had a hand in the Bersamin slay.

When asked if the reported involvement of communist rebels in his brother's murder could be part of the campaign by Valera to "cleanse" himself of any involvement in the Bersamin killing, Justice Bersamin replied: "[It] could be."

He stressed that the family was satisfied with the way police were handling the investigation. "It has been slow but sure. I told the police not to take any shortcuts nor let up in following leads."

Besides Panday and Dupo, the other suspects include: Sonny Taculao, Salvador Barbosa and Dennis Garcia.

Murder charges have been filed against Panday while charges against the others are still in the prosecutor's office.

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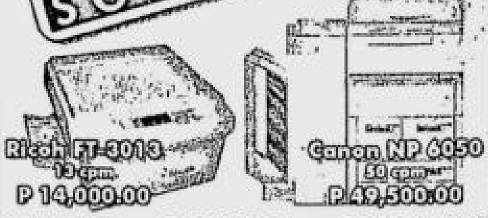

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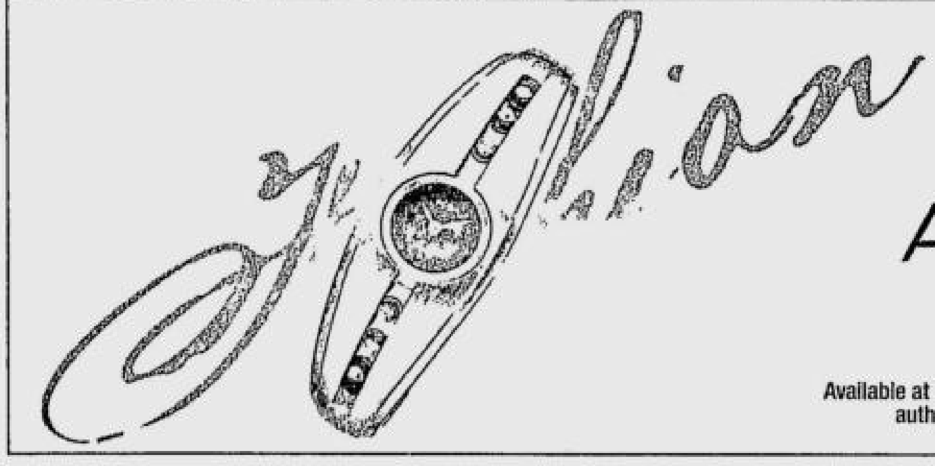

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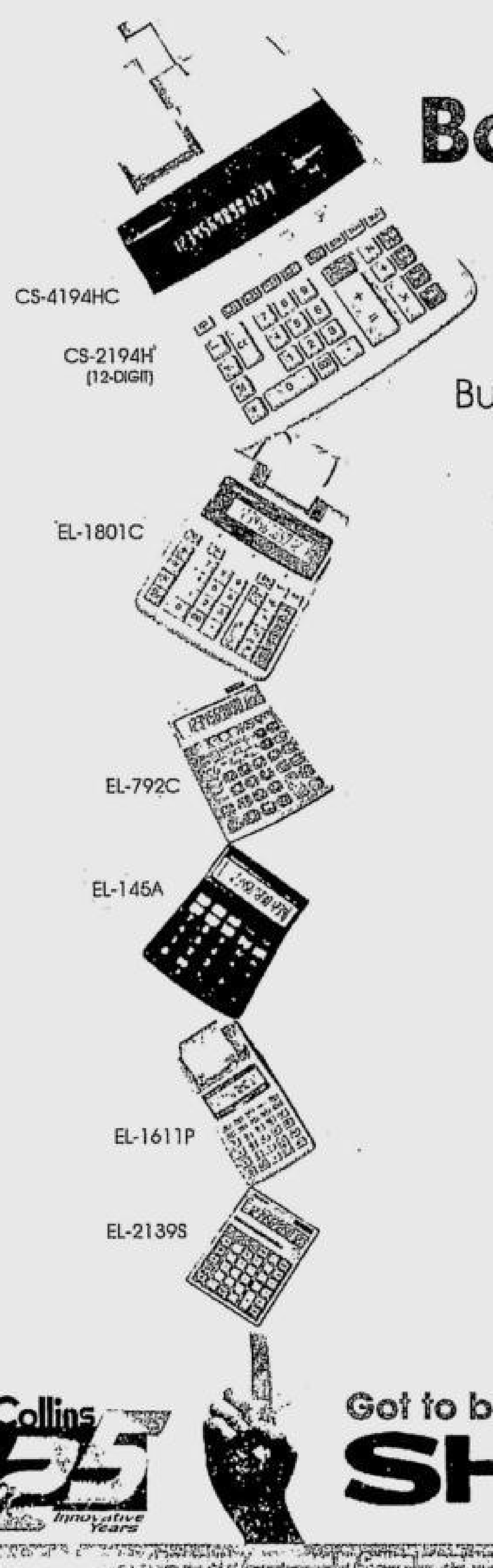

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UP students seek probe of fee hike

By Nestor P. Burgos
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—STUDENTS OPPOSING the 300-percent tuition hike at the University of the Philippines want legislators to step into the fray and investigate the matter.

UP Student Regent Raffy Jones Sanchez, who led some 500 students in a protest on the UP-Iloilo City campus on Thursday, said they wanted the Senate and House committees on education to ask the state university's Board of Regents to explain why they approved the tuition increase despite the opposition of student groups.

Sanchez said more protest actions would be held on various UP campuses.

The 12-member UP Board of Regents approved the increase, 7-0, in a meeting on Dec. 15. The increase for this school year will raise the cost per academic unit from P300 to P1,000 on the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses,or an average of P18,000 per semester; and from P200 to P600 on the Baguio, Visayas and Mindanao campuses, or P10,800 per semester.

Regents Sen. Juan Flavier and Rep. Cynthia Villar were absent during the meeting. Sanchez said he and Faculty Regent Roland Simbulan did not attend the meeting in protest over the sudden change in venue

"The increase will only make a UP education farther from the reach of poor but deserving students," said Rizza Joy Mapa, chair of the UP-Visayas University Council and spokesperson of the Kabataan Party in Panay.

Mapa scored the government for spending billions of pesos on counterinsurgency while students will have to pay higher fees because of cuts in the budget of state universities and colleges.

The UP administration justified the increase, citing the increasing cost of operations of the university. It also pointed out that the last fee increase was implemented in 1989.

Sanchez said coordinated protest actions all over the UP System have been set after the Board of Regents rejected the appeal he filed against the "hasty" approval of the increase.

He said they were also planning to petition the courts to stop the increase.

He said the higher rates would result in more students who passed the UP College Admission Test failing to enroll largely because of the higher rates.

Around 6,500 students enter UP yearly from the 65,000 who take the UP College Admission Test. The UP system has around 18,000 undergraduate students.

'New rules won't help domestics'

THE FEDERATED ASSOCIATION of Manpower Exporters (Fame) yesterday accused the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) of unwittingly promoting illegal recruitment when it came out with restrictions on the deployment of domestic helpers abroad.

"The policies will eventually lead to the further rise of illegals because the legal recruiters would now stop deploying domestics," Fame chair Alfredo Palmiery said, citing the no-placement fee policy imposed by the POEA.

The POEA had also doubled the domestics' minimum basic pay to $400, raised the minimum deployment age to 23 and required all new hires to undergo training, assessment and certification before they leave for abroad.

Addressing a gathering of the Philippine Columbian Association, Palmiery said many legitimate agencies had stopped deploying maids to the Middle East because it was no longer profitable for them.

"Illegal recruitment is on the rise since eager and desperate female workers who want to work in the Middle East are falling into the clutches of illegal recruitment syndicates," he said.

Palmiery also belittled the 545 new contracts announced by Labor Secretary Arturo Brion as coming from countries willing to accept the $400 minimum salary.

The POEA has confirmed that there was a 50-percent drop in the deployment of maids to the Middle East from 12,000 monthly to 6,000 in the last 45-day period when the rules were imposed. *Jerome Aning*

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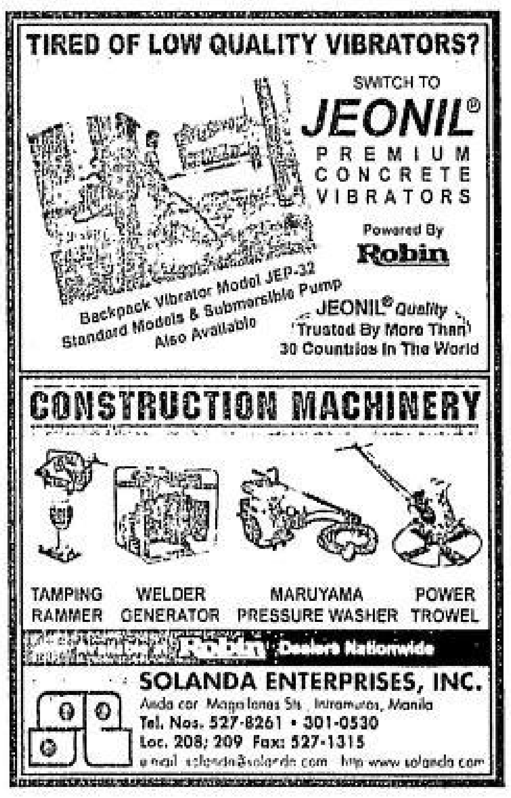

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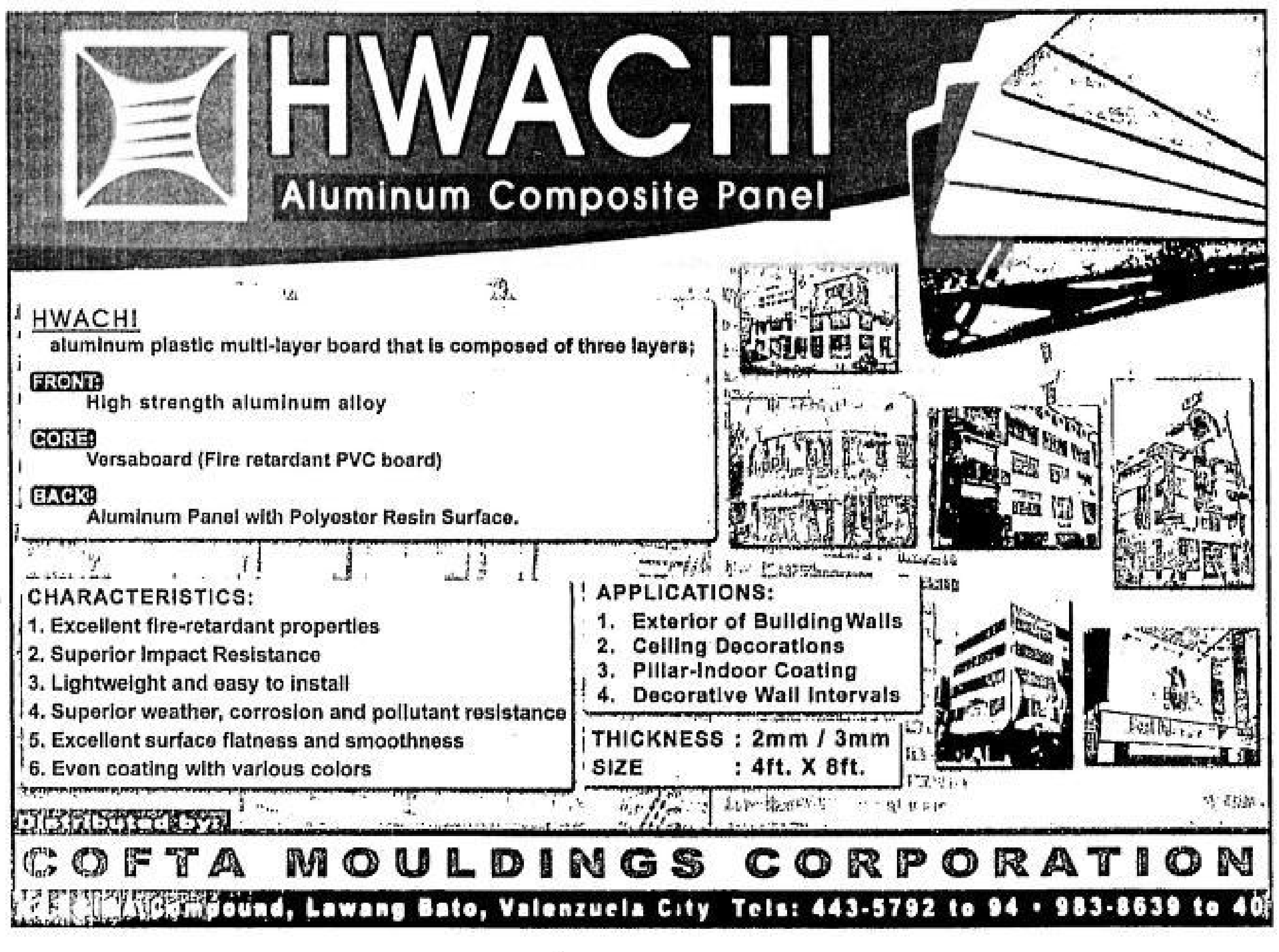

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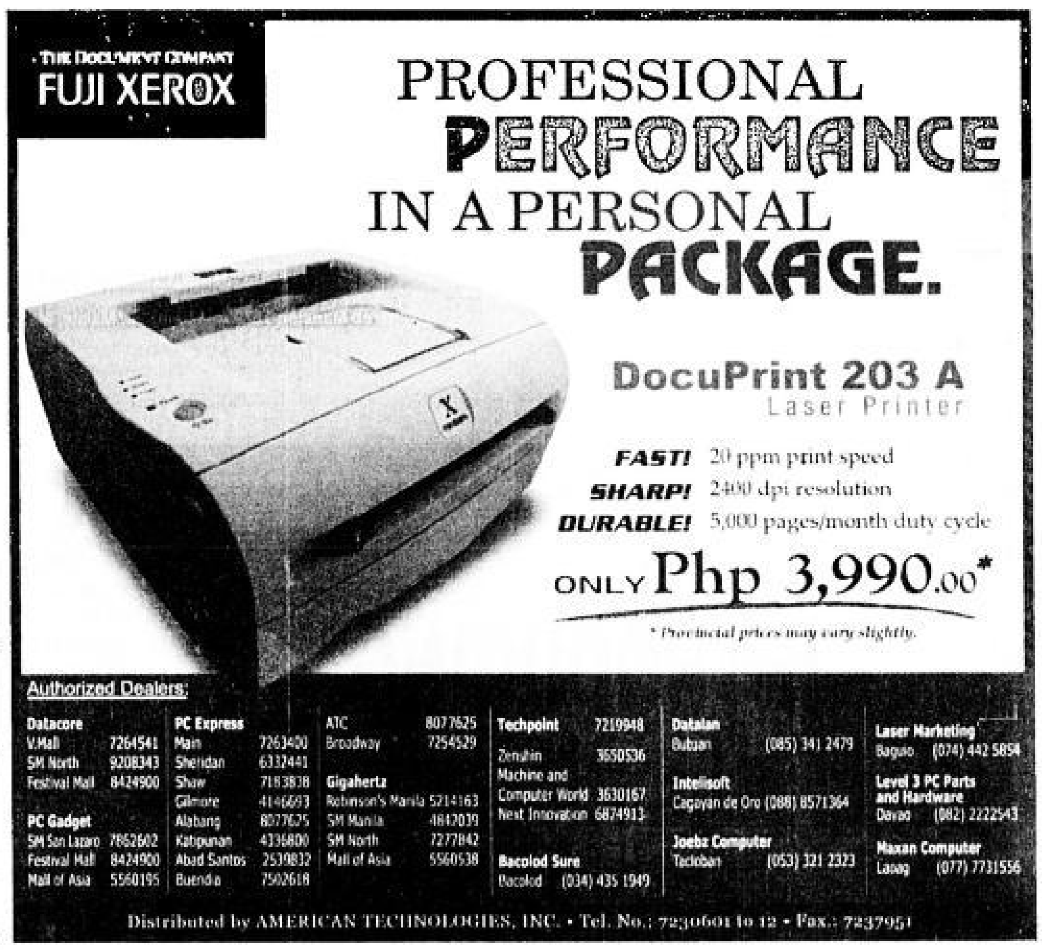

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Joker, Ralph defend joining GMA slate

From page A1

gency state, her dual-track moves to amend the Constitution, and "anomalous deals and contracts" involving government corporations.

But they stressed that Ms Arroyo never badgered them to toe the government line.

"We have opposed the President on many major issues, before the Supreme Court no less. And we won ... Yes, the administration has committed grave blunders. But through all these, the President never tried to dissuade us from opposing her," they said in their statement.

"Why then should we not run again in the administration Senate slate? It has never tried to undermine our independence or bind our conscience or stand in the way of what we believed had to be said and done. It has respected, if it did not always enjoy, our roles as senator."

Military adventurers

"Throwing jabs at Ms Arroyo's opponents, Arroyo and Recto said that while it was the opposition's prerogative to want to impeach the President, "one has yet to hear the opposition denounce attempts by military adventurers to topple the government and set up another one outside the Constitution."

"They have steadfastly refused to recognize the constitutional succession of the Vice President," they added, referring to Vice President Noli de Castro.

De Castro is an honorary member of the Wednesday Group, to which Arroyo and Recto also belong. He was mentioned as a possible successor to Ms Arroyo during flurries of coup rumors last year.

Economy looking up

"In short, the opposition want to write their own ticket and take back power on

ARROYO

the broken back of the Constitution. That is unacceptable on our part and self-contradictory on theirs," the pair said. "They fought, commendably, the foul attempt to change the Constitution but they will not uphold the Constitution."

They also said the country's economic prospects were looking up under the Arroyo administration.

"The economy is improving. Inflation and unemployment are dropping. True, the rich are getting richer and these improvements have yet to be felt by the vast majority of the poor. But no question, little by little, the people are getting better off," the senators claimed.

Wednesday Group

"No one can deny that the country is moving forward. The political choice in the coming election is to trip up the country or help it along."

Concluding, Arroyo and Recto said: "On balance, until the opposition can offer something more than the impeachment of the President, the country is better off letting this administration complete the work it is doing while keeping a close watch on anything else it may attempt."

The joint Arroyo-Recto statement, as well as separate statements to reporters by Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, confirmed that the four members of the Senate's so-called Wednesday Group had decided, albeit painfully, to go separate ways in the senatorial elections.

In a joint briefing, Villar and Pangilinan said that the four of them "agonized" over their decision to take separate roads after realizing that they could not run together in view of their different personal circumstances.

Difficult decision

"We've wanted to run on one slate, but there were limitations to this. We can only go together if one's views and principles are not affected," Villar said.

Pangilinan agreed.

"It was difficult," he said. "In a sense, we were agonizing over our options. But we're all realists, and we recognize that having been in politics for some time, there's a reality that we need to face ... Because of differences in our circumstances, our decisions will be different."

Their announcement followed a series of talks by the Wednesday Group members this past week to try to break their deadlock over whether they should run under the administration or opposition ticket, or go independent.

Before the opposition's announcement that it would take Pangilinan into its slate, the Majority Leader said he planned to run as an independent.

A highly placed source said Pangilinan believed that it would be more complicated to be with either of the two coalitions than going independent.

The source said Pangilinan was concerned that his children might no longer understand what he was fighting for as a politician.

"Those in the administration were previously in the opposition, and those in the opposition now were in the administration before. It is confusing," the source quoted Pangilinan as telling him.

"I cannot go Erap because I asked him to resign. I cannot go GMA because I asked her to resign. I would not be able to explain that to my children," the senator said. *With a report from Cynthia Balana*

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Why priests seen to attract women

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT IS PROBABLY EVERY YOUNG MAN'S fantasy.

Alone in his room, this particular young man was startled awake by a nocturnal visitor, a voluptuous woman offering to spend the night with him.

Instead of jumping at the opportunity, he wriggled out of the situation. He told the woman he was too tired and that the following day would be best.

He never kept his "promise" to the woman. But he remained true to his vocation.

The man was the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, then a young priest accompanying his bishop at an orphanage in the United States. His story has become legend among clergymen, showing that there's no dearth of female admirers among the men of the cloth.

Many men can easily yield to female temptation. Priests just can't. It is a lifelong burden they carry.

People, regardless of age or gender, can easily get attracted to the man behind the altar, according to Fr. Sid Marinay, vice chancellor of the Archdiocese of Manila.

"It takes a lot of responsibility to handle this," he told the INQUIRER.

Take, for instance, this middle-aged woman who once made life miserable for a baby-faced priest in Metro Manila.

Counseling session

It began with an innocuous counseling session. Soon, the woman was making frequent visits to the church, to his office, or wherever her counselor was. She also volunteered for church groups and attended Mass twice daily just to be with the priest.

"She was always finding a reason to be there," recalled a parish employee familiar with the story. When she was already becoming a nuisance, people in the parish had no choice but to ask her to leave."

Another female parishioner of about the same age got attracted to the same priest.

During Mass, she would always sit in the front pew, dressed to the hilt, for a good view of the man. She'd even put on more lipstick before communion.

Power relationship

Marinay, the parish priest of the St. Maria Goretti Parish on United Nations Avenue in Manila, believes attraction to clergymen involved a "relationship of power."

"When priests speak, they define what's good, proper and acceptable to the Christian faith," he explained. "But this power is always in the context of their moral authority, unlike that wielded by politicians, which is based on the sheer concept of power."

Some parishioners refuse to leave priests alone.

Marinay said stalking and obsessions usually begin with misdirected counseling sessions.

'Wounded healers'

Priests, "wounded healers" as they are, sometimes fall prey to the psychological concept of "transference," wherein a person seeking counsel tends to transfer her emotions to the counselor, according to the vice chancellor.

For instance, a woman seeking advice over a crumbling relationship sometimes sees the priest as more than just a shoulder to cry on.

"On some occasions, she sees in him qualities that she liked about her boyfriend and later on, sees him as a better substitute," Marinay said.

Some women can be attracted to the man's status as a priest or a seminarian, not to the man himself.

For good

Marinay recalled the case of a woman who practically made herself available to a young seminarian. She invited him to her debut party, soon dated him, and then convinced him to leave the seminary.

"But when the guy left [the seminary], somehow the girl didn't like him anymore," he said.

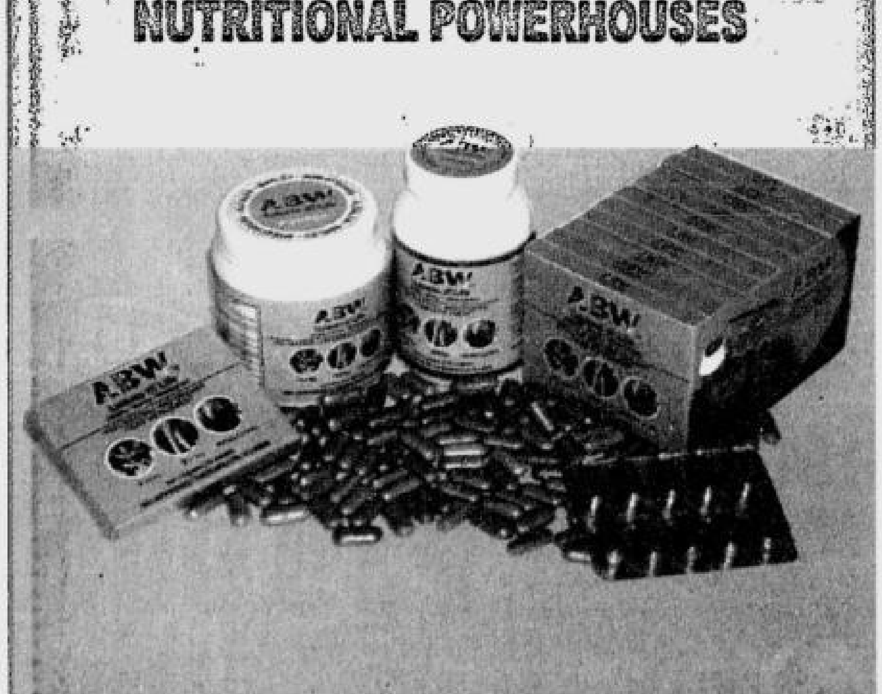
Upset, the young man went back to the seminary. But just as he was awaiting ordination, the woman showed up again.

He abandoned his vocation for good. But not long after, she left him again—for good.

Edification

The problem about obsessive parishioners—like those who sent another Metro Manila priest in his 30s loads of letters professing undying love—can be essentially addressed with a clear understanding of what is "attraction" and what is "edification."

"In attraction, we attract people to ourselves," Marinay said. "In edification, we allow people to see God through us."



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Did British star, flight attendant do it or not?

From page A1

A 38-year-old Qantas stewardess has been suspended and could lose her job after fellow crew members allegedly spotted her and Fiennes leaving the same aircraft toilet cubicle moments apart, The Sunday Telegraph said.

In a statement lodged with her employer and obtained by the paper, Lisa Robertson said the actor had become "amorous" with her after the pair chatted together during a flight from Australia to India late last month.

But she denied having sex with the 44-year-old star of "The English Patient" and "Schindler's List."

"While conversing with Mr. Fiennes during my break, I expressed a need to go to the toilet," Robertson said in her statement. "I went to the nearby toilet and entered it, he followed me and entered the same toilet.

"I explained to him that this was inappropriate and asked him to leave. Mr. Fiennes became amorous toward me and, after a short period of time, I convinced him to leave the toilet, which he did.

"I left the toilet a short time later."

The newspaper was unable to get a comment from Robertson, but a spokesperson for Qantas confirmed that a flight attendant had been stood down following an onboard incident.

Fiennes was in Australia in January to perform at the Sydney Festival. He and his longtime partner Francesca Annis separated last year. *AFP*

6,124 RP couples kiss to break world record

From page A1

and listened to music until midnight. After a countdown broadcast on loudspeakers posted all around the area, they kissed exactly at midnight.

"It was our first time to join the celebration and we participated to beat the record of Hungary," said Katherine Hermosa, who was with her boyfriend.

"It has brought us closer together, we are proud of breaking the record," said Jade Lynn Grados, a young woman who, like her boyfriend, was dressed in a red shirt for the event. *Reuters, AP*

Naga City cited as country's 'most friendly to children'

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—THIS CITY ON WEDNESDAY received the first-ever "Most Child-Friendly City" award in the urbanized city category, besting cities like Manila, Makati, Cebu and Bacolod in the delivery of basic services to its young constituents.

Vice Mayor Gabriel Bordado, who received the award at Malacañang, said it was quite a feat to beat the other cities.

Numerous awards

But Bordado appeared to be more excited over President Macapagal-Arroyo's question as she handed him the trophy: "Do you still have a place to put this award?"

The President apparently was aware of the numerous awards Naga City had received under the administration of Mayor Jesse Robredo, 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Public Service, the past 12 years.

Bordado said it was nice to hear such a comment from the President.

He said the most recent recognition bestowed on his city was the result of the cooperative efforts of its government and private sector to institute mechanisms for the protection of its children.

The comprehensive program that promotes the rights and welfare of children under the United Nations Convention earned for the city the P350,000 cash prize.

Hall of Fame

Aside from its numerous awards bestowed by various government and non-government organizations, Naga City has been listed in the Hall of Fame of Gawad Kalinga Award.

The United Nations itself has taken notice of several governance practices of Naga City, among these, its urban poor housing program which the UN cited as one of the world's best models.

The Ninoy Aquino Foundation has also cited Naga City's participatory process for people empowerment, through its Naga City People's Council.

The search for the most child-friendly municipalities and cities was launched last year by the government advocacy group Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC).

Bordado said a CWC survey team came to Naga and scrutinized the city's programs for its children's welfare and protection.

The vice mayor said the CWC team examined the plans and interviewed the people responsible for the service institutions already in place.

Universal access

He said the award recognized Naga City's effort to provide its children with universal access to education for preschool kids and basic education for regular school-age children.

He said the CWC also cited the alternative learning options for school dropouts under the Division of City Schools, with support and funding coming from the Naga City School Board.

The city's nutrition program and its provision of health services to children until they graduate from school, as well as the services given to pregnant and lactating mothers, were likewise given recognition.

Naga's social welfare services office provides legal and protective services for children in difficult situations, who are directly supported by the city police's children's and women's desk, Bordado said.

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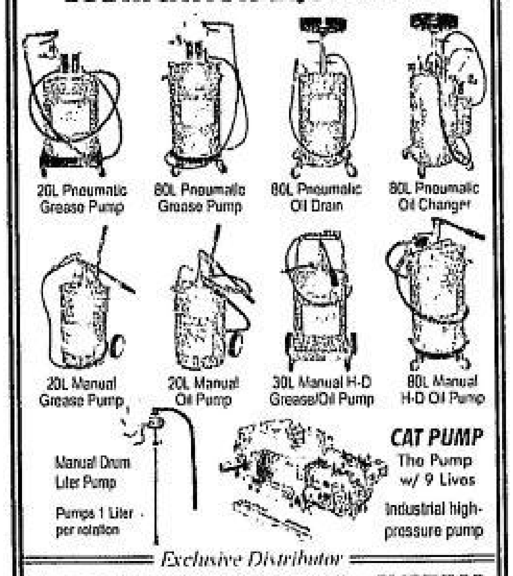
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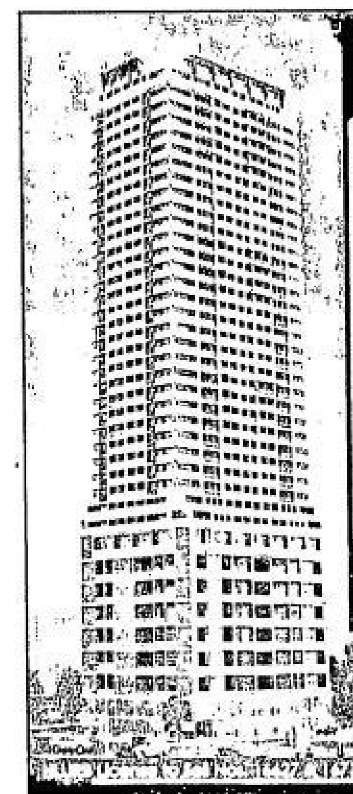

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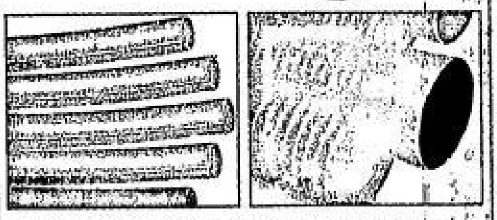

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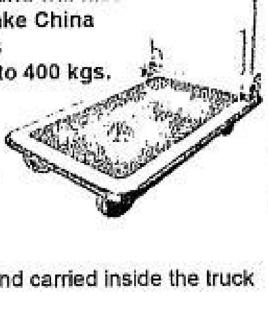

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Erap's withdrawal

EDITORIAL

JOSEPH ESTRADA'S DECISION TO PREVAIL UPON his son JV Ejercito and cause him to withdraw his senatorial candidacy in favor of those of other "principled oppositionists" is a political earthquake—not least because Ejercito, the deposed president's son by former actress Guia Gomez, had already spent a considerable amount of money on election collaterals. But though the withdrawal shook the political landscape, it did not change it.

In contrast, an announcement that Estrada himself would withdraw from the political scene, if only for the duration of the election period, would have been a real tectonic shift; it would have dramatically changed the landscape.

Estrada, who is under house arrest in his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal on a plunder charge, offered a simple explanation for his decision to convince his son, the two-term mayor of San Juan town, to pull out of the Senate race: "This is to dismiss the idea that the coming elections are a proxy fight between [me] and President Macapagal-Arroyo, as many of Malacañang's spin doctors want to project."

On that last point he is, indubitably, right on the money. The entire machinery of spin at the administration's disposal is busily whirling at work, framing the May 14 elections as the third round of an Arroyo-Estrada bout. There are other frames being tested, all of them variations on the same theme: The coming elections cannot be construed as a referendum on Ms Arroyo's conduct during and since the Hello, Garci scandal. But the main frame remains the same: The elections are an opportunity for Estrada to get back in power.

In other words, the coming electoral contest is being spun as all about Estrada's vindication, not Ms Arroyo's legitimacy.

We can understand why the administration's spinmeisters, especially senatorial candidate Michael Defensor, prefer to define the stakes in exactly this wise: They have their eyes, not on what remains of the 40 percent who voted for Estrada in 1998, but on what has become of the 60 percent who did not.

But a hard look at the circumstances also forces us to the unmistakable conclusion: Estrada's conduct since late last year has provided wood for the frame, or fuel for the fire.

His lead role in putting together a Senate slate for the so-called United Opposition was guaranteed to put the spotlight, not only on the candidates but also on him. Even the protestations of ex-Sen. Francisco Tatad assumed an inordinate role for the former president. Estrada's own high profile provides the administration's message with the half-truth it needs to gain and grow in credibility.

The ruckus over Senate President Manuel Villar's frustrated visit to Estrada's Tanay rest house last week is a case in point. Yes, there is no reason why the third-highest official in government should be barred from visiting the former president. Yes, the administration is over-reacting—deliberately, like bad actors—to the supposed security threat against Estrada. And yes, Estrada has every right to feel aggrieved by such treatment.

But there is no reason why he should cause the incident to be splashed all over the news; there is no strategic purpose to be achieved.

The news about Villar's vitiated visit reinforces public perception, yet again, that Estrada is calling the shots for the opposition. This is not a good thing, in part because it confuses the issues at stake in the May elections, and in part because it simply isn't (always) true.

Now consider this possibility: Estrada sends his invitation to Villar through other, less visible means; he spreads the word about what he would like the opposition to do, if they win at the polls; he suggests an input or two in the opposition's proposed platform—and then he retires from view. He tends to his garden in Tanay, out of sight and, perhaps in time, out of the public's mind. Would that break the administration's preferred frame—and help put public attention back on the President's crisis of legitimacy? Think of the aftershocks.

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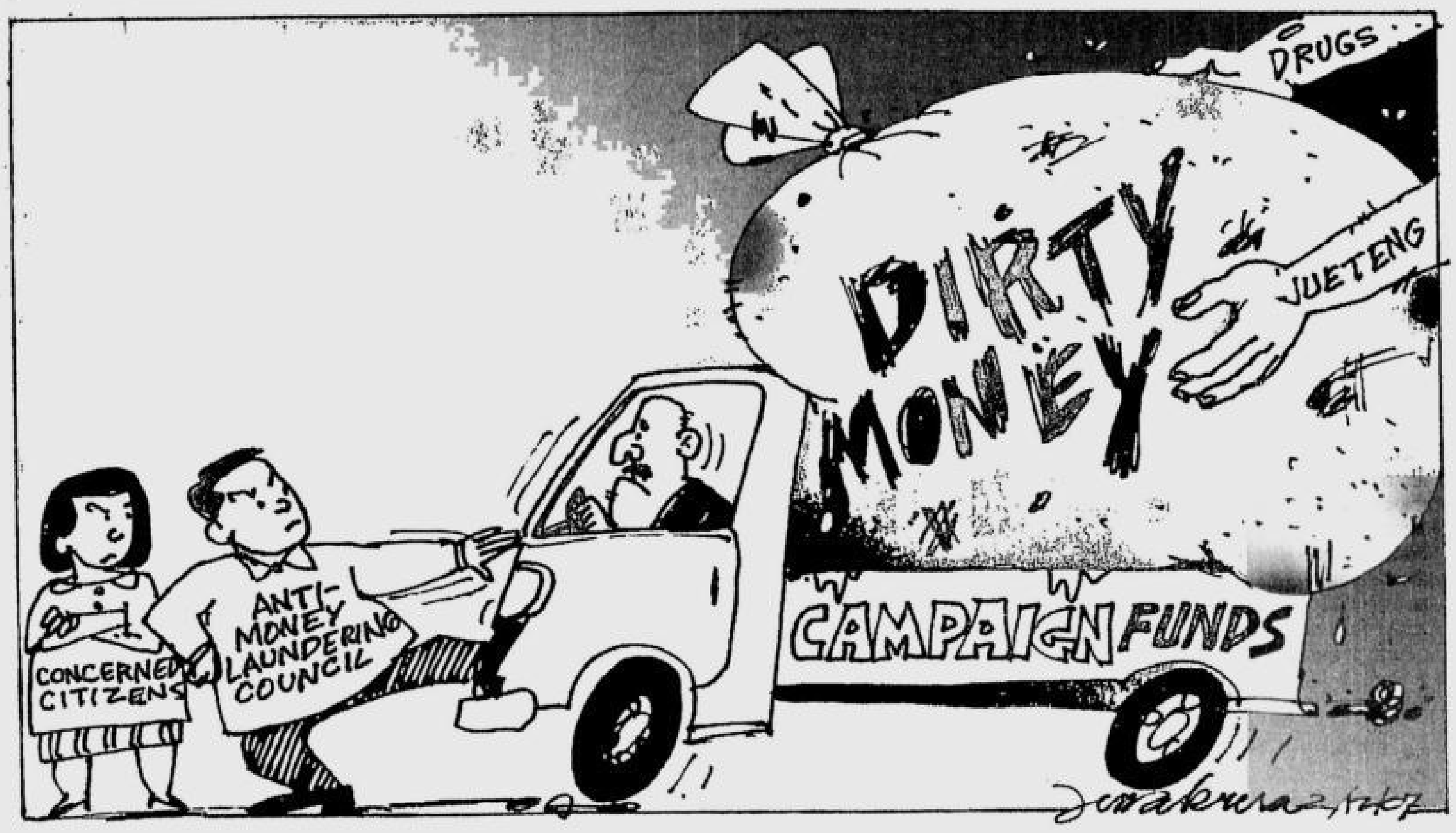

No talk, no mistake

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHY WOULD A PRESIDENT BE AFRAID OF, and even be hostile to, questions from her constituents about her administration? Answer: If she knows she cannot answer those questions truthfully and satisfactorily.

President Macapagal-Arroyo abruptly terminated a press conference, which she herself called at Malacañang before the weekend, when she did not like a reporter's question. But the question was very simple:

"Isn't it a concern for you, Ma'am, that the billionaires during the time of Marcos and Ramos are also the same billionaires now?" asked the INQUIRER's Malacañang reporter.

Before he could finish the question, GMA snapped: "That's a political question. That's it. That's the end, thank you." She pushed her chair back, stood up and rushed off.

That was not a political question. That was an economic question. The gist of it all is, why isn't the claimed "economic boom" not being felt by the masses? Yes, the businesses of the taipans have boomed, but why are there still so many people who have nothing to eat and no roofs over their heads? The statistics written on paper do not reflect reality. That was a perfectly legitimate question that any sensible person would like to be answered.

Where is the alleged "boom"? Where are the billions of pesos being raked in by the businessmen? Why don't these billions trickle down to the poor who desperately need them?

The reporter's question could have been answered with a simple "Yes" or "No." Question: "Isn't it a concern for you, Ma'am ...?" Is she or is she not concerned?

She could have answered: "Yes, I am concerned, and I am working on it. It takes time, you know."

She could have behaved with more decorum, like a true President, not a despotic queen. She invited the reporters to the conference. They were asking relevant questions that have been rankling in the minds of the people. As the President, she has the duty to inform her constituents about what's going on.

So, why is she afraid to face questions?

The reason is obvious: She does not know the answers, and she is afraid to commit another mistake. It's the "No talk, no mistake" technique of former Sen. Genaro Magsaysay all over again. But while Magsaysay tossed it off as a joke, GMA has added her own brand of venom to it. *"Nambabastos!"* was the term used by many.

In the first place, why did she invite the reporters if she didn't want to answer questions? Reporters are a very inquisitive lot. By keeping herself away from the press for so long, the President only increases the press people's inquisitiveness. Have you noticed that it is Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita who have been briefing the press? GMA has been shying away from the media more and more since the "Hello Garci" scandal. She still cannot answer that one, so better "No talk, no mistake."

And yet GMA pines for more positive publicity. She complains that the press is not publishing the accomplishments of her administration. But how will the press know those achievements if she hides from the press? *Tinatarayan pa.*

She wants to have a good press but she treats the press badly. During a press conference, she imposes the condition that no political questions should be asked. No political questions during the campaign period of a political year? When the whole nation eats, breathes and thinks politics? And she herself goes all over the country to shake hands and deliver speeches—in other words, play politics.

What GMA is trying to do is manipulate the press in her favor. That, she will never succeed in doing. To paraphrase a famous saying: She can fool some of the press people all the time, and fool all of them some of the time, but she cannot fool all of them all the time.

And yet, members of the press are the easiest people to get along with. All they ask in return is to be given the truth. *Walang bolahan.* A politician may think he has successfully convinced a reporter with his *bolada* when the latter does not say anything. But wait, he is weighing everything in his mind. He will check your story with other sources and look at records. When your story checks out, he will be your friend. But when he finds out that you fooled or tricked him, beware. He will get back at you, maybe not tomorrow, not next week, or not next month—but sometime, when you least expect it.

In my experience, the people who are afraid to face the press are those who have plenty to hide. If you have no skeletons in the closet, you won't be afraid to open them.

Some people are uncomfortable facing the press because they know they have to tell the truth. Press people have that uncanny sixth sense that tells them when a person is lying. And there are people, politicians especially, who cannot finish a sentence without telling a lie. Like a certain person we all know.

And ever since the "Hello Garci" tape scandal, GMA has held fewer press conferences. Reporters get most of their stories from Bunye, Ermita and former presidential chief of staff Mike Defensor.

GMA is shying away from the press because she cannot give what it wants—the truth. Until now, she has not told the truth about the Garci scandal. Until now, she has not quelled the fears of many that she may not be our real President.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: A cannibal was walking through the jungle when he came upon a restaurant operated by a fellow cannibal. Feeling hungry, he sat down and pored over the menu:

"Roasted missionary, $10 a serving; boiled explorer, $15; baked politician, $100."

The cannibal called a waiter and asked: "Why is the politician so expensive?"

The cook, standing nearby, cut in: "Have you ever tried cleaning a politician? They're all full of s—t!"

Apocalypse

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

DÉJÀ VU.

The reason Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is President today owes to one other reason than that she asked Garci to make her win by a million votes over Fernando Poe Jr. and that her minions carried out a massive switching of ballots in Tawi-Tawi and neighboring districts. The latter borne out by the fact that the tallies in many precincts were either not signed by the public school teachers or carried signatures that bore no resemblance to human hand. I am not exaggerating. Look at the "thumbprints" in some of those tally sheets and ask yourself if they were made by thumb or paw.

But like I said, the reason GMA is President is not just because she did that. It is also because of something equally important, if not more so. That is that the so-called opposition, represented in great part by the FPJ camp, bungled things monumentally. The way the FPJ campaign was conducted remains an object lesson in how to lose without really trying. How anyone can possibly manage to not get the most popular candidate on earth—more popular even than Erap, who won over his nearest rival, JDV, by the kind of landslide you see only in Ormoc and Infanta—to dominate an election, it takes talent of the vastly negative kind.

The point is this: GMA became President not just because she cheated but because she made her victory over FPJ plausible.

Until the Garci tape came out a couple of years ago, by the grace of God and Ong, I myself thought GMA might have won the elections. That was so because she ran a more efficient, if epically corrupt (nb, Joc-Joc Bolante, the PhilHeath card, the PCSO and Pagcor ads), campaign. Or conversely, because her main rival, or his handlers, ran theirs to the ground.

Had the FPJ camp been half as competent as Erap's, the cheating would have been patent and intolerable, and would have driven FPJ's legions into the streets in violent protest. As it was, well, all Kiko Pangilinan had to do was say, "Noted," and that was that.

Well, folks, it's happening all over again.

Truly, people who do not heed their history are doomed to repeat it. Hell, people who cannot stop, look and listen for the history train are doomed to be run over by it. Two developments are particularly scary in that respect.

The first is that the cheating machinery isn't just in place, it is well-oiled and ready to spring into action. Only recently I got a text message that said: "What are the bishops doing about the Comelec officers in the 'Hello Garci' tape that have just been promoted? They are: Francisco Pobe, Renato Magbutay, Ray Sumalipao, Remlane Tambuang." Good point. And should be addressed not just to the bishops but to everyone: What the hell are we doing about them?

Yet that is nothing compared to something even scarier. Look at the placements of public officials. You have Ronaldo Puno as head of the DILG, you have Benjamin Abalos as head of the Comelec, you have Hermogenes Esperon as AFP chief, and now you have Hermogenes Ebdane as the new defense secretary. What do they have in common? They are the people believed to have engineered the massive cheating in the last elections. Puno as mastermind, Abalos as chief executor, and Esperon and Ebdane as implementers in the field. The two Hermogeneses specifically appear in the "Hello Garci" tape.

They are the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

But here's the bigger rub. A massive hoax is about to be sprung upon an unsuspecting electorate while the so-called opposition is self-destructing right before our very eyes. I've always thought, and said, that the May elections will go the route of the American elections last year and our own elections in 1971. The issue in the last American elections, though not a presidential one, was George W. Bush, because of the Iraq War. The issue in the 1971 elections, though not a presidential one as well, was Ferdinand Marcos, because of the Plaza Miranda bombing. The issue this May will be Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo because of the "Hello Garci" tape.

Or so I thought. One would imagine with the elections shaping up that way, the "opposition" would put up a united front and make the contrast between them and GMA a lot starker. Or put the distance between them and her a lot longer. Or one would imagine that they'd get their act together and register their opposition to GMA's illegitimacy and dictatorship a lot more stridently.

But no, the opposite is happening. Instead of creating a broad united front, the opposition has divided itself into the Erap people and the non-Erap people, with the Erap people getting favored treatment in UNO. JV Ejercito's decision to make way for Sonia Roco is far too little and probably far too late. The rest of the pack, disgusted by that turn of events, but with their own political ambitions flailing at them like a whip to a horse, have gone their separate ways, many of them making their own pacts with the devil. Or joining the administration camp or groups allied with GMA. What thoroughly idiotic things to do.

What it does is not just to confuse the issue, turning an election that would and should have been a judgment on GMA, the way the American elections of 2006 and the Philippine elections of 1971 were, into a farce. It reduces a historical watershed into a choice between relative bastards and opportunists. Indeed, what it does is render the cheating that is about to be sprung on this country invisible. At the end of the day, the administration can claim—with much believability—that the opposition candidates lost, not because the Four Horsemen wrought an apocalypse upon them but because they shot themselves in the head.

It's bad enough that we're back to the rule of a tyrant. But for people to fight it armed only with stupidity! *Onli in da Pilipins.*

The dismissal epidemic

Sounding Board

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE DISMISSALS AND SUSPENSIONS OF LOCAL elective officials seem to be reaching the level of an epidemic. And, of all things, I am being blamed by some because long, long ago the Ombudsman was my student. But those were the days before the 1987 Constitution, and Republic Act 6770 (the Ombudsman Act) and RA 7160 (the Local Government Code). Besides, it is not unusual for a disciple to surpass the master. At any rate, what seems to be the score?

One cry being raised against the Ombudsman is that, according to the Constitution, the power of the Ombudsman is merely investigatory and recommendatory. Copious quotations from the "Record of the 1986 Constitutional Commission" are cited in defense of that proposition. Indeed, it was for this reason that the Ombudsman was referred to by the late Commissioner "Soc" Rodrigo as a "toothless tiger." But, as I recall, it was in response to that criticism that the Constitutional Commission decided to give to the Ombudsman the power to "perform such functions or duties as may be provided by law." As Commissioner Christian Monsod put it during the deliberations of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, "With respect to the argument that he is a toothless animal, we would like to say that we are promoting the concept in its form at the present, but we are also saying that he can exercise such powers and functions as may be provided by law in accordance with the direction of the thinking of Commissioner Rodrigo. We do not think that at this time we should prescribe this, but we leave it up to Congress at some future time if it feels that it may need to designate what powers the Ombudsman would need in order that he be more effective. This is not foreclosed."

Thus it was that the Ombudsman Act of 1989 expanded the powers of the Ombudsman. Sec. 21 of the Act gives to the Ombudsman disciplinary authority over elective and administrative officials, and Sec. 25 gives the Ombudsman the power to suspend or dismiss such officials. Are these constitutional?

This issue has been taken up by the Supreme Court in a number of cases involving administrative officials, and the power has been upheld in those cases. As early as 1995, the Court already recognized that the powers enumerated in the Constitution are not exclusive; and that the framers of the Constitution had given Congress the leeway to prescribe, by subsequent legislation, additional powers to the Ombudsman.

But is the power of the Ombudsman to remove public officials still applicable to elective officials? I believe that this has to be looked into very carefully. When Congress grants a power to an official, it does not mean that the power can never be taken away. There is no such thing as an irrepealable law. Any law may be repealed by subsequent law either expressly or impliedly.

Has the power to dismiss elective officials given by the Ombudsman Act of 1989 been repealed?

The powers given by the 1989 Ombudsman Act to the Ombudsman by Sec. 25 include the power to impose penalties ranging from suspension to dismissal. In 1991, however, in the implementation of the guarantee of local autonomy for local governments, Congress passed the Local Government Code. Sec. 60 enumerates grounds for disciplinary action against elective officials. The last paragraph of Sec. 60 says: "An elective local official may be removed from office on grounds enumerated above by order of the proper court." What effect does this have on the older provision found in the Ombudsman Act? Can the two provisions live together?

I have not found any Supreme Court case involving an attempted removal of an elective official by the Ombudsman. But in 1996, the Court already ruled that even "the Office of the President is without any power to remove elective officials, since such power is exclusively vested in the proper courts as expressly provided in the last paragraph of Sec. 60 [of the Local Government Code]." Again in 2002, although *obiter*, the Court said: "It is beyond cavil, therefore, that the power to remove erring elective local officials from service is lodged exclusively with the courts . . . The law on suspension or removal of elective officials must be strictly construed and applied, and the authority on whom such power of suspension or removal is vested must exercise it with utmost good faith, for what is involved is not just an ordinary public official but one chosen by the people through the exercise of their constitutional right of suffrage."

Although *obiter*, it is significant because the conclusion was drawn from the "Congressional Record" on the debates about the Local Government Code. The important point made is that the power to remove elective officials has been made exclusively judicial. The Ombudsman does not belong to the judiciary.

There is, moreover, another limitation on the power of the Ombudsman pointed out by the Court even in those cases where the Ombudsman has jurisdiction. The law says that where the penalty imposed is censure or reprimand, or suspension of not more than one month, or a fine not equivalent to one-month salary, the decision is final and unappealable. All other penalties imposed by the Ombudsman are not final and unappealable and are not immediately executory. And execution must await decision on the appealed case. This limitation has been affirmed in at least two 2006 decisions.

I trust that the Court decisions so far cited should be enough for those responsible for the epidemic to arrest its spread.

Remembering

Kris-Crossing Mindanao

Noralyn Mustafa

IT WAS THE 7TH OF FEBRUARY LAST WEDNESday. Like in all previous years, the date came and went unnoticed. For the past 33 years, it has never been marked by any observance of any kind. It is only vaguely recalled, if at all, by a very few.

Maybe because, like the song says, "what's too painful to remember, we simply choose to forget."

Before daybreak of Feb. 7, 33 years ago, the town of Jolo was attacked by MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) fighters (then called "Maoists" by the people in the countryside) under Nurullaji Misuari. For three straight days, we non-combatants were shot, strafed, bombed and shelled incessantly day and night. Many went deaf, and many more died from cardiac arrest. Our town was razed so totally that not even the landmarks that survived World War II were left standing.

And the carnage began—and lasted for years.

As a consequence hundreds of thousands were killed, tortured or raped, and hundreds of thousands left Sulu never to return. To this day, there has been no real estimate of the cost of lives and property wrecked and lost in that battle.

But much more than this, Feb. 7 marked the death of a community, the end of a way of life.

It also marked the death of a beautiful indigenous culture. Priceless heirlooms and ancient artifacts were either looted or irreparably destroyed by the military. The older generation, the keepers of our art and skills, our music and poetry, our oral folklore and traditions, were either killed or simply chose to flee, without being able to pass on their knowledge to the younger generation.

For Misuari now to talk so casually of "war"—which, he threateningly implied, would be the alternative to his leadership—is like rubbing salt and pouring vinegar on an old festering wound. For us who had to live through that hell 33 years ago, his words are as cruel and as heartless as the war itself was.

How he can so easily talk of "thousands who will be killed," can, of course, be explained by the fact that he was not around to see those thousands killed. When the war broke out, he had already sought refuge in the Middle East and reportedly issued orders from there.

He did not even see, as I did, how those who had carried out his orders, believing in their cause, ended up—like sieves dripping blood while being dragged by their comrades; or piled up stiff and bloated near a bodega; or thrown into a septic tank that had to serve as their grave; or as body parts floating in floodwaters down the main road.

He was not here when thousands of Tausugs could not even bury their dead and had to sleep starving, in the rain.

This is a very personal thing for me because, during those days, men were usually shot on sight and I had to be the one to go and hunt for food for the family, rushing to wherever it was reported the military had broken into a bodega to loot. I almost got shot by an irate soldier who shouted at me to get up from a case of powdered milk that I had grabbed and sat on. It was milk for the babies in the neighborhood who kept on crying through the night because of hunger.

Thirty-three years ago Ustadz Habier Malik was probably not even in his teens. He never knew some of our best and brightest, a few of them scions of prominent families who had never held a gun in all their sheltered, even pampered, lives, but who had to fight the armed forces in those ruthless battles in the jungles where no prisoners were taken.

Many of them fell with strings of *biyanban* (boiled, mashed cassava wrapped in coconut leaves) and dried fish (for their sustenance in between the fierce fighting), still hanging from their necks.

They were compelled to fight with only one encompassing motto: *agama, hulah, bangsa* (faith, homeland, race). Their only political agenda was "self-determination."

But that was 33 years ago. Then, the Islamic faith and the Moro race were imperiled. The Tausug and Samal youth training on the island of Corregidor for a top-secret plan to attack Sabah were traitorously massacred. Muslim communities all over Mindanao were attacked by the "Ilaga" and other Visayan armed groups, reportedly in connivance with military elements. Men were massacred, women were raped, children mutilated, and the survivors were forced to abandon their sources of livelihood, their lands. And the Philippine military had the power of life and death over everyone else, especially in the countryside.

Malik was too young to be aware of, much less witness, all those atrocities and sufferings.

But Jess Dureza did. Jess began life as a journalist in Davao, in Mindanao, and the first time I met him was at a conference of publishers and print journalists held by the Philippine Press Institute in Baguio City, a year before the proclamation of martial law.

It is now the 21st century. Even "Tutpek" the Ilaga chieftain, has long been buried and forgotten. Diplomacy has intervened to avert more massacres and running battles.

I met Jess again in Jolo when he was appointed by the newly installed President Macapagal-Arroyo as special emissary to MNLF Chair Misuari. It was a confidential and delicate mission for which we had to travel to Silangkan on the west coast to meet Misuari. Very risky too. Messengers who bring bad news are shot.

But Secretary Dureza delivered the message gently but firmly, and we got back to Jolo with every lock of his hair in place. Ms Arroyo could not have found a better peace negotiator.

If he were to be removed from the peace panel, as Malik wishes, that will be a sad day for us, the gunless non-combatants. Who will speak for us then?

* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Team Bansot

The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

"HELLO, CALABASHA?"

"Good morning, Ma'am! The weather's so nice!"

"Yesh. I am proud to shay that the excshelent weather ish a shign of our shucceshful frograms! Almosht four weeksh of cool breeshesh! We shall achieve firsht world weather shtatush in 20 yearsh!"

"Uh, but I thought the weather's just been unseasonably cool this February after being unseasonably warm in Decem-"

"Jusht becaush General Fafaitan ish retired doeshn't mean you should be a shmart aleck!"

"I am sorry, Ma'am. Congratulations on another success."

"Lishten. Bushy day today. Are you frefared?"

"Yes, Ma'am! We have decorated the town plaza for the announcement of our official 'Team Bansot'!"

"I thought I told you to change the desighnashion of your shtufid-shounding barangay?"

"The bill wasn't passed, Ma'am."

"Whaat? Shtufid! That shtufid, shtufid uffer houshe!"

"Ma'am, it was the Bastusan Pambansa that didn't pass the bill renaming our Barangay…"

"Whaat? I shall call a sfeshial shesshion!"

"But the campaign is starting, Ma'am, can't it wait until the contest is over?"

"No! I want a sfeshial shession and I want it now! Where'sh my ballfen? Here! I have shigned a decree."

"You mean, a proclamation, Ma'am?"

"Whatever. It will all be the shame shoon enough. Tee hee. Anyway, the frefarationsh…"

"Yes, Ma'am. We have the big posters—"

"Sho fretty. All colored fink. I like."

"…The theme song…"

"'Boom Belat, Belat,' I like! It'sh what we do. Let'sh shing!"

"Yes, Ma'am! *Ilabas mo na ang inyong suhol/ Ang fertilizer fund na itinago sa baul/ Pwede kaming gumamit ng granada o Armalite*

Habang may sumisipol…"

"My turn, Calabasha! *Itono mo ng ayosh ang iyong gitara/ Nang hindi shintunado pag ako'y kumanta/ Pag nagcamfaigning dapat lahat ay mashaya/ Kung hindi tataryan ka…* Take it away, Calabasha!"

"*Contest na, contest na/ Tayo nang magkaisa/ Boto na, boto na/ Simulan na ang saya.*"

"Together! With feelingsh! *Boom belat belat, boom belat belat*

Kayo'y watak-watak, boom belat boom… Finish the shong!"

"Yes, Ma'am! *Na konkreto na ng mga kalye/ Nakatayo na rin ang mga posters, see?/Ang mga balota ay nasulatan na/Maging ang halalan ay ayos na!*"

"That wash fun! Anyway. Go on."

"The slogan is ready, too."

"*Kwarta o bartolina!* I like! Sho shnaffy!"

"The board of judges…"

"Sho, Chairman Ayosh hash fut everyone in flashe? Good…"

"The security…"

"Yesh, the shecurity guardsh shaid it'sh all OK."

"Oh, General Espadahan?"

"Shhh. No. Our shecret weafon. Fafaitan."

"But Ma'am everyone knows about him—"

"Sho? It'sh an ofen shecret! The besht! Tee hee."

"Uh, Yes. Anyway, I think 'Team Bansot' will go to victory!"

"Oh? Why?"

"Ma'am? Uh, I thought the whole point is for our team to win."

"No. We're shmarter than that!"

"I don't understand, Ma'am?"

"That'sh why you're only a barangay caftain! You shee, I don't care about the teamsh. Have you notished anything different about Congreshman Garafal and Mayor Matacao?"

"No…"

"They are now membersh of my fet farty, Kakurakot ng Matatakaw na Filifino! for short."

"You mean, they're no longer stalwarts of—"

"No! They're no longer stalwartsh, they're my wartsh! That'sh a joke."

"Ah, err…"

"Laugh. Or else no fork barrel for you."

"So hilarious, Ma'am!"

"Yesh. Anyway, shee? They are all mine, now. I pashed my own mining act, you shee… He'sh mine, she's mine, they're all going to be mine…"

"You're the real McCoy, Ma'am!"

"New, and imfroved."

"Of course!"

"Sho, I don't care what the teamsh do. I'm checking my lisht, and checking it twishe. The Bashtusan Pambansha will be oursh. While everyone's bushy with the teamsh, I will be flanning with Shingaw! After the contesht, we will frosheed with feofle's initishiative! Then my fet farty will froceed after that succcesh!"

"You have it all planned out, Ma'am, but won't 'Team Bansot' be upset they ran for nothing? Their championships will be meaningless if we abolish the upper house and only have the Bastusan-—"

"Sho? That'sh ashuming they have jobsh. They're mainly going to loshe, anyway."

"They are? But I thought we have a strong team—"

"Don't be shtufid. Keep your friendsh closhe. But keep your enemiesh even closher. That'sh all. You think they'll get money from me?"

"But of course?"

"No way. I frefared to shupport them but not 100 fercent."

"So clever!"

"Yesh… Wait, hold on… I have another call. Wait."

"Shtufid, shtufid!"

"What is it, Ma'am?"

"It wash a conferensh call from that shtufid Team Banshot of ours!"

"What did they want, Ma'am?"

"Can you believe? They ashked me, 'Ma'am, 'yung dagdag, 'yung dagdag—"

"My God!"

"Can you believe? On an ofen telefone line! I shaid, if you won't reshfect me, reshfect my offishe!"

"Yes, they shouldn't say such things!"

"Yesh. At leasht, not by calling my offishe. They should ashk in pershon! Anyway, I have to go. I'll pash you on to Atty. Bihon for the other detailsh…"

"Yes, Ma—"

"Hello? Calabasa? Mala Bihon here, c: you?…"

God be with you, Nandy

Reveille

Ramon J. Farolan

MY FIRST MEETING WITH NANDY PACHECO, HE OF THE Gunless Society, was at a dinner with friends in one of the Valle Verde villages. It was shortly after Edsa I and, at that time, the idea of a gunless society was the farthest thing from my mind. Too many people were moving around with guns, or with bodyguards whose waistlines were bulging with all kinds of hardware. My impression of Nandy was that of a well-intentioned individual completely out of touch with reality.

I lost track of Nandy and our paths never crossed again for some time. But somehow the phrase "gun-less society" stuck in my mind. Each time a shooting occurred in the community which resulted in a fatality, I would be jolted by the thought that without the guns, there would be fewer killings and less mayhem in our lives.

Last September, just before leaving for the United States, I got a call from Nandy. My feeling was that he was busy setting up the platform for an organization that would provide citizens with an alternative to the political merry-go-round that passes for Philippine-style democracy. I was grateful for the opportunity to exchange ideas with him and to provide some inputs for a few of his advocacies. He invited me to join the general assembly meeting of his organization Ang Kapatiran, scheduled for November. With much regret I told him that I would be away for a few weeks and would be unable to attend the meeting.

Some of the items which we discussed concerned the use of active military and police officers as aides and security personnel for politicians and government officials. We were in full agreement that there was too much abuse of this privilege, and valuable manpower was being diverted from more important functions. We also agreed that a fixed term of three years for the AFP chief of staff, regardless of the statutory age of retirement, was good for the military organization. (This was before Congress approved the bill on the tenure of the AFP chief. Unfortunately, the measure up to now has not been signed into law by the President.)

There were also a number of issues on which we disagreed. But somehow I felt that with Nandy, there was always room for clarification, understanding and possible resolution of differences.

Last December, Nandy called again and I suggested that, perhaps, it would be best for the holiday season to pass before we sat down for more serious talk. Somehow, my instincts told me that Nandy had other things in mind aside from a discussion of principles and programs for good governance.

Sure enough, our first breakfast meeting proved my instincts right. Among other things, Nandy was lining up individuals for a Kapatiran senatorial slate. He proposed a campaign similar to that put up by non-politicians of Quezon City, who banded together to wrest control of City Hall in the '60s. If my memory serves me right, men like former UP president Vidal Tan and retired Navy Capt. Charlie Albert were part of the group known as the Quezon City Council for Good Government. Running as underdogs, they beat the local politicians without having to resort to any of the hanky-panky that seems to be accepted these days as part of our political exercises.

Unfortunately, after winning, the group slowly broke up, to the disappointment of Quezon City residents. Nandy accounts for the failure of this group to a lack of shared principles and party platform that would have kept their organization intact through the ups and down of city administration. Perhaps, this was his way of explaining why he first set up Ang Kapatiran, a party with clear and specific policy objectives which focuses more on moral principles rather than political expediency.

I thanked Nandy for keeping me in mind but, at my age and with all my health problems, I felt that running in a nationwide race would be unfair to all concerned. I suggested younger people who shared the same aspirations and yearnings for our country. As usual, Nandy had all the answers. He said, "the youth are too busy making a living and raising families. We, the senior citizens of this country, must take up the burden of setting things right for future generations. After all, we have been responsible for all that has happened to our country and our job now is to try to correct the errors and abuses of the past."

If we are thinking of alternatives, Nandy Pacheco's Ang Kapatiran provides us with a vehicle for meaningful change.

* * *

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo is accused of committing a faux pas at the United Nations when he informed UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon that retired chief justice Hilario Davide is the new Philippine Representative to the United Nations. Davide has an ad interim appointment issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo. And as Fr. Joaquin Bernas noted in a recent column, an ad interim appointment "is as good as an appointment confirmed by the Commission on Appointments." He also pointed out that the Supreme Court in 2002 ruled that an ad interim appointment takes effect immediately, and the appointee can at once assume office and exercise all the powers pertaining to the office.

Davide's situation is similar to that of former US Ambassador John Bolton who assumed his post at the UN on an ad interim basis, while facing stiff opposition from the Democrats in the US Senate.

The problem in New York has nothing to do with protocol. It has to do with officials wanting to stay on instead of gracefully bowing out from the service.

Starting today, "Reveille," the column of Ramon J. Farolan, will appear every Monday in this space of the Opinion section.—**Ed.**

THEY SAID

Guarantee lessons

"I realized that these people are willing to lay down their firearms provided their security is guaranteed. They are very much willing to leave their firearms behind, provided their security is guaranteed."

—Undersecretary Ramon Santos of the Office of the Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process, referring to the lessons he learned as a hostage at the Moro National Liberation Front camp in Panamo, Sulu

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It's time for world's citizens to address global warming

ALLOW ME TO COMMENT ON the news item on global warming. (INQUIRER, 2/3/07) I believe that one does not need to be an expert to know that the problem has reached a critical point. We ourselves have experienced climate change in the series of strong typhoons, heavy rains, massive floods, devastating droughts and unusual temperatures that have hit our country in recent times.

Moreover, the recent report of the United Nations-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls on us and our world leaders to immediately adopt urgent measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired plants, petroleum-fueled vehicles, etc. The debate on the issue of whether or not the scientific evidence on global warming is irrefutable is over. The question now is how to address the crisis, more especially if those who can make a big difference refuse to act on it.

Indeed, some world leaders, including US President George W. Bush, seem averse to the Kyoto Protocol. Though they have publicly embraced the UN report, at policy level, they remain reluctant to take the necessary step, aware that it could be detrimental to the interests of profit-oriented Big Business, which is responsible for the billions of tons of greenhouse gases emitted in the past decades into the atmosphere.

It's up to us citizens of this world to meet the challenge and change the way we relate with nature. If we must stop global warming, we must send a strong message to our political and business leaders and ask them to invest in environment-friendly technologies. Our planet is our home and we need to care for it and protect it not only for our sake but also for the sake of our children.

—BRO. GILBERT S. BILLENA,
O. Carm, Order of Carmelites,
Justice and Peace
and Integrity of Creation,
brobillena@yahoo.com

CRM-generated printout is as good as official receipt

THIS IS A REPLY TO THE LETTER titled "Toothless," from Trinidad Esturas-Peteza. (INQUIRER, 2/5/07)

We, at the Bureau of Internal Revenue, thank Peteza for bringing to our attention her "lamentable" experience with a business establishment's "failure to issue an OR." However, we would like to correct her impression that the BIR is "toothless" or "reluctant" in enforcing revenue laws, rules and regulations regarding the issuance of receipts.

To monitor and encourage compliance by business establishments with the rules and regulations on registration, bookkeeping and invoicing, the BIR conducts on a regular basis the Tax Compliance Verification Drive (TCVD) or tax mapping operations.

As of November last year, the drive had netted 48,672 erring establishments. From the violators of regulations on the issuance of receipts alone, we have collected close to P40 million in penalties. We have also prosecuted (criminally) and padlocked establishments for failure to comply with the regulations.

In 2004, the BIR's "Bayan I-txt ang Resibo" raffle promo recorded 8,294 cases of non-issued ORs, from which we were able to collect close to P2 million in penalties. The "Premyo sa Resibo" (PSR) program, a joint initiative with the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., has led to the investigation of at least 88,542 taxpayers.

To further promote full compliance with our invoicing requirements, we have established an electronic NO OR (NOn-issuance of Official Receipt) complaint facility. Through this system (no-or-complaint@bir.gov.ph), the public can now report any establishment that does not issue an invoice by simply giving its name and address online. To date, this e-complaint facility has received 148 complaints and netted 37 violators from whom we collected P197,525 in penalties.

The above-cited efforts concretely demonstrate our resolve to enforce the tax laws and exact higher compliance from taxpayers. It is therefore unfair for Peteza to describe the thousands of working men and women of the BIR as "toothless," worse, "reluctant" when it comes to doing their work. Proof that Peteza's observation was wrong is the fact that we increased our collection in 2005 by at least P100 billion.

At any rate, our field office in Daet, Camarines Norte has already investigated Peteza's complaint. Upon verification, we found out that that the fast-food chain in question is using a BIR-registered CRM (cash register machine). Thus, the "computer printout" or CRM-generated tape receipt given to her son is for all legal intents and purposes considered an official receipt, the request for a loose-leaf receipt notwithstanding.

We hope we have clarified and addressed Peteza's concern.

—JOSE MARIO C. BUÑAG,
commissioner,
Bureau of Internal Revenue

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

MY BELOVED COUNTRYMEN:

The coming May election is a very important historical opportunity for you to change the course of our country's political history. It is an opportunity for you to express through your votes the strong disapproval of the GMA administration which you have been repeatedly manifesting in the series of opinion polls conducted over the past three years.

Some people have been trying to bill this coming election as a proxy fight between GMA and Erap but to me this is not a GMA-Erap fight but a struggle between those who are for good governance and accountability and those who support a cheating, lying, stealing, and oppressive administration which has made your lives more miserable than before.

The UNO, as you know, is the coalition of opposition forces that is forming a senatorial ticket to fight the administration's senatorial candidates. To avoid the suspicion that I am the UNO's godfather, I intentionally decided not to play an active role in the UNO process of selecting the opposition's senatorial candidates. As a result, even those politicians who had been active in attacking and impeaching me in the past have now been included in the opposition's senatorial lineup.

The UNO's selection process also resulted in the inclusion of my son, San Juan Mayor J.V. Ejercito, not on the basis of my intercession but rather on the basis of his sterling qualifications, accomplishments, and high rankings in the poll surveys. Like any father, this of course made me very proud and happy but at the same time it made me feel uneasy because I did not want UNO leaders to think that my support for the UNO ticket would be contingent on JV's inclusion. Earlier, the UNO had also wanted to include my wife Loi in the ticket as a reelectionist, but Loi and I decided that she should give up her reelection bid for the greater good of the opposition.

Since the inclusion of JV's name in the tentative UNO senatorial ticket, some people have thrown brickbats at me and questioned my moral leadership to lead the opposition but I kept quiet and bided my time because I wanted to see the dynamics of the opposition's selection process played out to the last minute, to find out who would remain true-blue, principled oppositionists and who would show themselves up as self-seeking opportunists.

Now that the UNO selection process is almost complete, I would like to announce that I have asked my son, JV Ejercito, to withdraw from the UNO's senatorial slate and to run instead for reelection as San Juan Mayor and that JV has consented to sacrifice his senatorial aspirations in the meantime for the good of the opposition and our country.

As a loving father, I have spent sleepless nights agonizing between a father's wish to see his son attain his political ambition to serve our people at the national level and my desire to ensure the formation of a broad, strong, and united coalition of anti-GMA forces in the coming election. In the end, my desire to serve the greater interest of our people prevailed over my paternal feelings and so I decided to ask JV to withdraw from the senatorial race. And I am proud to say that JV willingly agreed to do so to give way for a broader representation in the opposition's senatorial ticket.

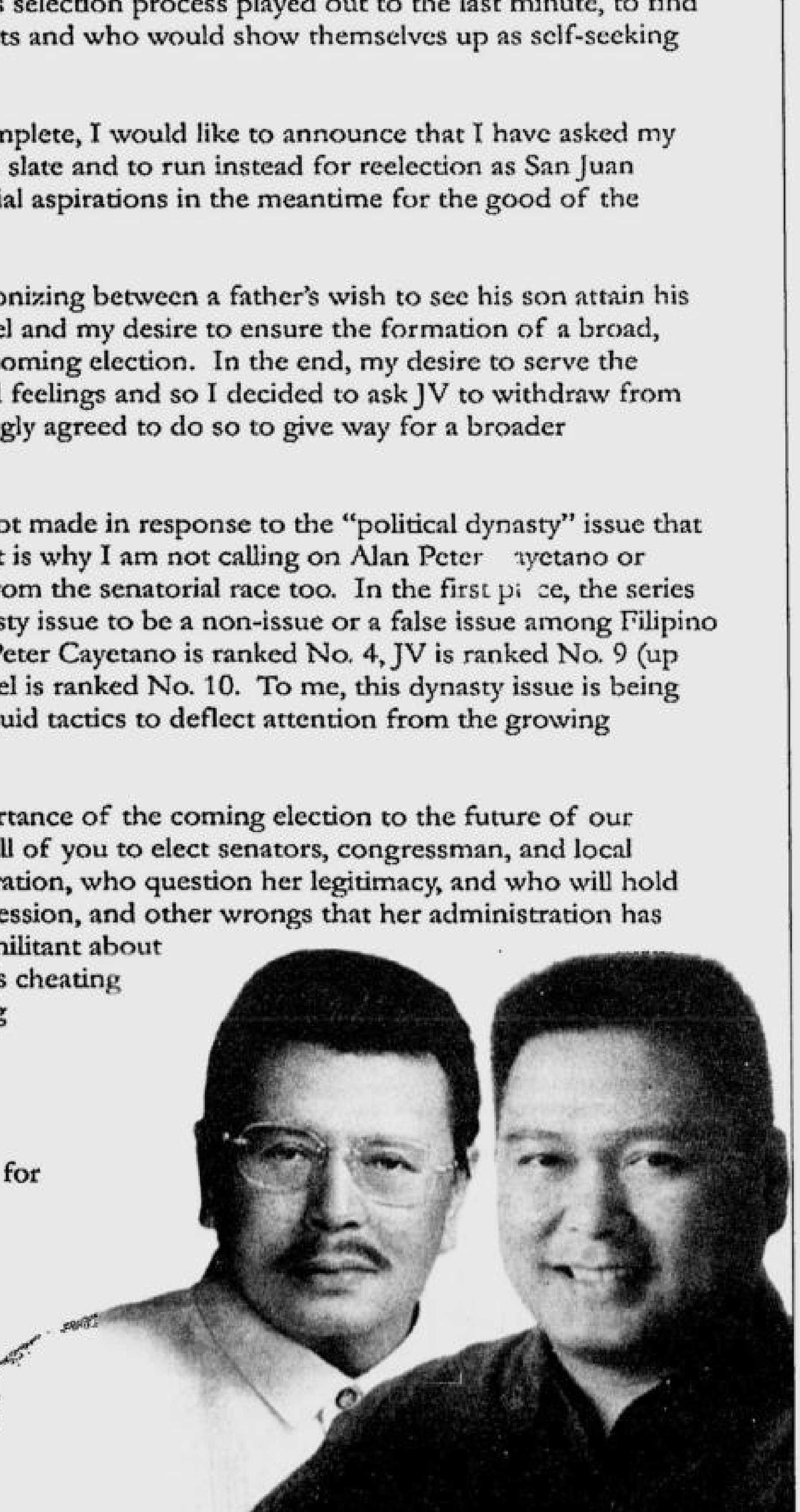
This decision of mine and JV's, incidentally, was not made in response to the "political dynasty" issue that has been raised by some people as a "moral" issue. That is why I am not calling on Alan Peter Cayetano or Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel to follow JV and withdraw from the senatorial race too. In the first place, the series of poll surveys on "senatoriables" are proving this dynasty issue to be a non-issue or a false issue among Filipino voters. According to the latest Pulse Asia survey, Alan Peter Cayetano is ranked No. 4, JV is ranked No. 9 (up from the previous ranking of No.11), and Koko Pimentel is ranked No. 10. To me, this dynasty issue is being played up by Malacañang and its lackeys as part of its squid tactics to deflect attention from the growing Macapagal-Arroyo conjugal dynasty.

In conclusion, I must again reemphasize the importance of the coming election to the future of our country, our children, and our grandchildren. I call on all of you to elect senators, congressman, and local officials who oppose the policies of the GMA administration, who question her legitimacy, and who will hold her accountable for all the cheating, lying, stealing, oppression, and other wrongs that her administration has inflicted on our people. You must also be vigilant and militant about guarding your vote. Remember that this administration's cheating machinery is still in place. Let us neutralize this cheating machinery to insure that the true voice of the people will be heard loud and clear.

I have always been for the people, I will always be for the Filipino people. And if this means fighting an illegitimate regime, I will fight it with the last breath I have.

God bless our country! Mabuhay ang Pilipino!

Pres. JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA



ADVT

Tatad explains 'The Moral Force'

THE INQUIRER'S FEB. 3 EDITORIAL STATED that because in 1972 I read Marcos' martial law proclamation and in 2001 I voted against the opening of the envelope which the prosecution had wanted to use to prove a charge not included in the Articles of Impeachment against then President Joseph Estrada, I should not even talk of helping anyone choose the right candidates in the May elections.

The editorial stated I have turned the dynasty issue into an exclusive problem of the opposition, although it is as much the administration's. Let me put all this to rest.

Marcos proclaimed martial law in 1972, pursuant to the 1935 Constitution. I read the proclamation. I did not write it, neither did I have any part in planning martial law itself, much less in exercising its awesome powers. I worked for the reopening of media, the lifting of press censorship and the release of jailed newspapermen, some of whom later found temporary havens abroad.

I have since been voted into office thrice—as Batasan member in 1978, and as senator in 1992 and 1995. I did not buy votes or engage in *dagdag-bawas*. I broke with Marcos in 1980, after 10 years of Cabinet service, over the dynasty issue in Catanduanes. Should I have said nothing about creating dynasties in the Senate, just because we in UNO were going to do it?

If we denounce Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for wanting to make all her children members of the House of Representatives, should we push dynasty politics to its farthest extreme by packing the 24-strong Senate with three dynasties? Would that not destroy the very institution we did not want our enemies to abolish? Would it make UNO a worthy alternative?

At the impeachment trial, I tried to follow the law, not the crowd. I refused to join those who, while sitting on the court as senator-judges, called for Estrada's resignation. With 10 other senator-judges, I rejected the opening of that envelope, which had been sent to the court without need of a subpoena, to prove a charge not included in the complaint. When the Senate finally opened it, it found nothing that involved Estrada, thereby confirming the correctness of our decision to reject it.

In 2004, I waged my best senatorial campaign but lost. We tried to document what happened, but ran out of money and missed the deadline for the filing of an electoral protest. Our lack of watchers proved fatal, but I was no longer naive enough to cry over it. Besides, we wanted no distraction from Fernando Poe Jr.'s electoral protest. Thus, I had wanted to make electoral reform a precondition for fielding senatorial candidates this time. No reform, no candidates.

I was virtually alone in this. The rest simply decided to unlearn their lessons from our last political fight. And so we got stuck. It is now for our people to assert their moral right and demand the best that is their due from their political leaders, the political parties and the State. This is what I mean by "The Moral Force."

—FRANCISCO S. TATAD

Fare overpricing by airport taxis

THIS MAY BE A LITTLE INCIDENT, BUT I would like to call the attention of the concerned officials to an experience I had last Jan. 5. I arrived at the Cebu Pacific domestic terminal at around 3:45 p.m. From the arrival area, I proceeded to a counter for hiring accredited airport taxis.

There were three persons manning the counter: a lady and two men—one was the dispatcher and the other was the driver. I asked them how much I had to pay for a ride to Molino 2, Bacoor. The driver, who was at the back of the dispatcher, replied P740. After the dispatcher finished writing the amount, I requested to see the fare table, which showed that the prescribed charge for the ride to Molino 2 was only P610. I pointed this out to the dispatcher, and so he made the correction. (I was given the cab with plate number PYZ-697 and body number C-087. On the right side of its windshield is a large seal with the words "Accredited by the Department of Tourism.")

I suspect that a number of passengers have been victimized by the accredited dispatcher and driver. While we are trying our best to promote tourism in our country by projecting a good image (e.g., taxi drivers returning luggage left in cabs; janitors and security guards returning big amounts of lost-and-found money), we still have these dishonest dispatchers and drivers.

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Duterte OKs ban on aerial spraying

DAVAO CITY—AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Arthur Yap failed to persuade Mayor Rodrigo Duterte from approving the city council resolution seeking a ban on aerial spraying in banana plantations when the two officials met here on Friday.

Earlier, Duterte said he was expecting Yap to lobby against the ordinance, which bans aerial spraying in the wake of health concerns.

Even before meeting Yap, Duterte hinted that he was going to approve the resolution by saying his prime concern was the health of his constituents.

The city has more than 5,000 hectares of banana plantation and about half of them were being sprayed from the air.

Environmentalists and residents living near the banana plantations have long complained of illnesses and blamed chemicals being used by banana companies, among them Dole-Stanfilco and Lapanday, as the culprits.

The companies have maintained that they are using safe chemicals to grow bananas for export.

They have lobbied hard during the city council's deliberations on the ordinance and have it disapproved by citing economic backlash.

The council approved the ordinance last month.

The companies, through the Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA), shifted their campaign on Duterte.

They sent him lobbyists, Yap being the most prominent.

But right after meeting the agriculture secretary on Friday, Duterte signed the resolution, effectively making it a law.

Duterte said that under the ordinance, banana companies have 10 days to shift into the use of boom sprays to control diseases such as Sigatoka.

"My stand was not against the growers but [my interest is] to protect the health of people," he told reporters shortly after signing the ordinance.

Duterte said the ban takes effect 10 days after publication in newspapers.

After signing the ordinance, Duterte "toured" Yap over the city aboard a private helicopter.

Speaking to reporters again after the "tour," Duterte said he showed Yap "blatant violations" the plantations have committed for years.

Through the aerial view, he said, Yap clearly saw the non-implementation of the 50-meter buffer zone indicated in the environmental compliance certificates issued to banana companies.

Yap admitted that he was dismayed over the mayor's decision to sign the ordinance because it was allegedly a classic case of "a tension between agriculture and the needs of the community."

"Mayor Duterte showed me the Carmen mountains, the site of the plantations, to help me appreciate the decision of the city council," he said.

But Yap maintained that the ban would strike a big blow to the banana industry in the city.

Bananas remain the country's second biggest export crop, he said.

Roger Chio, Southern Mindanao agriculture director, said the companies might already be contemplating on moving to other provinces.

Bukidnon is the only Mindanao province which has banned aerial spraying. It continues to host a number of banana and pineapple plantations though. *Rizalene Acac and Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

Escaped Cotabato prisoners hunted; 1 dead, 2 captured

KABACAN, NORTH COTABATO—Government security forces killed one of the 48 prisoners who escaped from the provincial jail on Feb. 2, the military said yesterday.

Two other prisoners were recaptured in a raid at a remote village here on Saturday, two days after members of an antiterror task force deployed to catch the group clashed with Moro rebels near the Liguasan Marsh.

The marsh, situated in the boundaries of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, is a known territory of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which is talking peace with the government.

Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said soldiers of the 38th Infantry Battalion were pursuing suspected members of the Pentagon kidnap gang in Kilagasan village when MILF guerrillas fired mortars on them on Thursday.

A 30-minute firefight ensued, but no casualty was reported from either side, he said.

"They (rebels) withdrew toward the southwest after sensing they were outnumbered," Ando said.

Col. Pedro Soria, 602nd Infantry Brigade chief, said civilians had told his men about the presence of four inmates in Barangay Pedtad shortly before 4 p.m. on Saturday. Soldiers were immediately sent to verify the report.

"Upon reaching the area, the suspects opened fire, prompting the soldiers to return fire," he said.

Soria said Indong Alipangen was killed, while Lando Serrano and Johnny Maanib were recaptured.

The fourth fugitive and their coddlers escaped, leaving behind an M-16 rifle, he said.

The MILF has denied staging the raid on the provincial jail. It pointed instead to the Pentagon, a group of kidnappers operating in Central and Western Mindanao.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol has issued a shoot-to-kill order on the inmates who escaped. He offered P50,000 to anyone who could bring any of them back to jail "dead or alive."

Piñol denied reports that one of them had already been recaptured.

Militant groups said Thursday's clash proved that the deployment of soldiers near the Liguasan Marsh was a threat to the peace process with the MILF.

The women's group Gabriela warned that hostilities would again result in the suffering of civilians living near the area.

Corazon Espinoza, Gabriela coordinator, said her group could not avoid worrying about the situation of communities near the marsh, citing the shoot-to-kill order. "Previous cases had proven that this order could bring more harm to civilians, who could be mistakenly shot," she said.

"It will also provide conditions to harass the families who could be suspected as coddlers of the escaped prisoners," she said.

Al Calica, Kidapawan City state prosecutor, said the shoot-to-kill order had no basis. "The act of bolting out of jail is not a crime under the Revised Penal Code," Calica said. *Charlie C. Señase, Jeoffrey Maitem, Edwin O. Fernandez and Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

Sorsogon bishop bucks DENR decision on Lafayette

SORSOGON CITY—SORSOGON Bishop Arturo Bastes described as subservience to foreign economic power the decision of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to allow the resumption of mining operations on Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay operated by the Australian company Lafayette Mining.

In a mobile phone interview, Bastes condemned the government's decision, saying it only served the interests of the foreign capitalists at the expense of the residents of Albay and Sorsogon.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes on Thursday announced in a press conference the decision to lift the cease-and-desist order imposed by the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) on the mining company following two cyanide spills in 2005.

Lafayette Philippines Inc. president and chief executive officer Carlos Dominguez said Reyes' decision allowing the resumption of commercial operation was good news not only for them but for all the mining stakeholders.

In a statement, Dominguez said Lafayette's resumption would definitely attract investors and will heighten the interest of more investors to do business in the country.

More importantly, the resumption will generate more jobs which are badly needed by the host communities, he added.

Bastes lambasted Reyes for allegedly lying to him that he would be given a copy of the technical report that was the basis of the DENR decision.

"We talked for almost two hours in Manila Hotel last Wednesday and he told me that he will give me a copy of the report before he announced any decision, but until now there is no copy of the report, which I was told was only 10 pages," Bastes told the INQUIRER.

He said Reyes also admitted to mounting pressure on the DENR to allow the resumption of the mines.

A multisectoral group in Rapu-Rapu has launched a signature campaign and has scheduled a prayer rally to manifest opposition to the mine's resumption.

Fr. Lino Bugaoisan, parish priest of the island municipality, said the DENR decision was "ridiculous and a hocus-pocus."

Bugaoisan said a prayer rally was scheduled for yesterday while stage plays to be presented by students of Aquinas University dubbed "Kanggot na Bulawan" (Gold Scythe) were to be held today and tomorrow at the town poblacion.

The priest said a signature campaign addressed to Lafayette's investors was now going around and would be sent to Australia once it gained enough support. *Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Woman, son die in blast

STA. MARIA, Bulacan—A mother and her 10-year-old son were killed when an acetylene gas tank left unattended outside a store in Barangay Bagbaguin here exploded on Thursday. Sta. Maria police chief Supt. Efren Ramos said Rosalinda de Guzman, 30, and her son, Jon Jericho, were walking in front of the Christian Gas Dealer shop here at about 11 a.m. when the tank exploded. Ramos said the tank was left outside as the store workers were busy bringing other tanks inside the shop. Employees from the Our Lady of Peace Funeral Homes here said the boy's head was severed while his mother lost an arm due to the impact of the explosion. Ramos said the store's owner told the police that a passing truck hit the gas tank, triggering the blast. The truck driver, however, denied this, Ramos said.

Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

Mobile cars for ARMM cops

CAMP PENDATUN, Parang, Shariff Kabunsuan—Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon turned over on Thursday at least 11 police mobile cars to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to increase police mobility. Calderon said the mobile cars were slightly used as these were used to secure delegates to the recently held Asean summit. He said the region will also receive additional vehicles to help the police fight criminality. "Next month, expect to receive new pickup (trucks) for the use of your mobile patrol groups," Calderon pledged.

Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

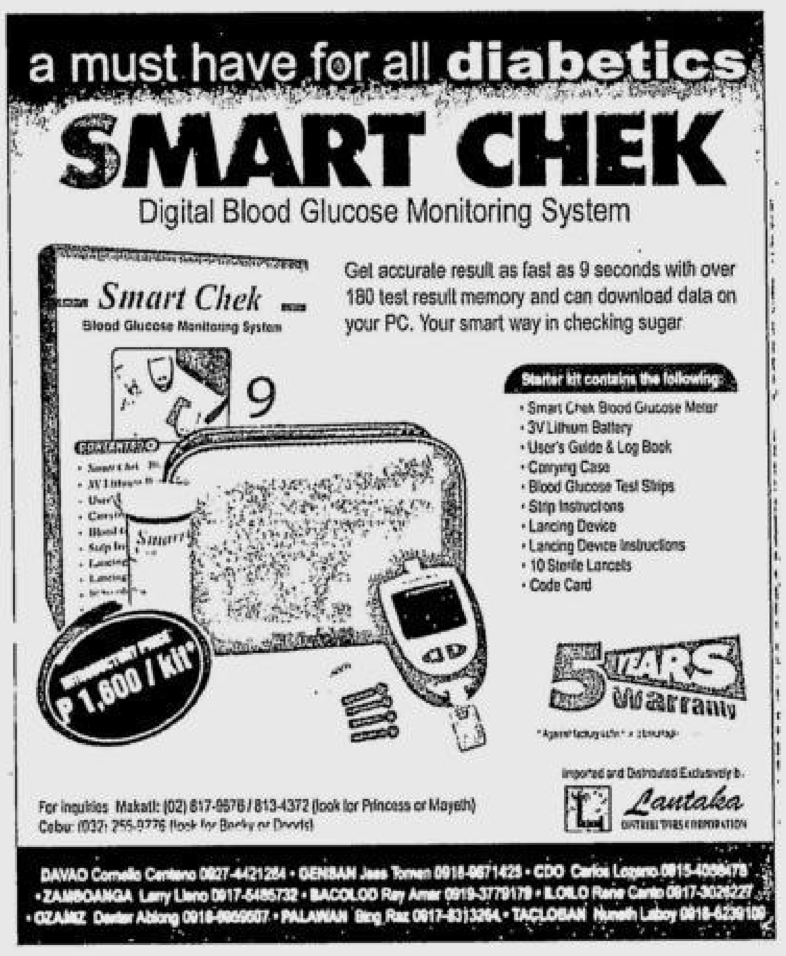
Diarrhea outbreak in Sorsogon City

SORSOGON CITY—City Health Officer Inocencio Lee has declared a diarrhea outbreak Thursday following the confirmation of 14 diarrhea incidents in Barangay Poblacion, Bacon district. Majority of the patients had the amoebiasis type of diarrhea which is deemed fatal if not immediately attended to. The outbreak was traced to a contaminated water source as residents were reported pilfering the water supply line. Lee said the city health office had already coordinated with the city engineering office to immediately fix the water supply system as health workers went around to distribute chlorine to residents.

Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Donations for child with heart problem

FOR THOSE inquiring how they could send donations to Jerwin Batlles, the 4-month-old baby who has two holes in his heart ("Jerwin's parents need help," Feb. 5, page A18), his father's bank details are: Edwin Batlles, Acct No. 0057-3008-92 Land Bank of the Philippines Buendia Branch. Jerwin's parents are thanking those who extended help in their own little ways.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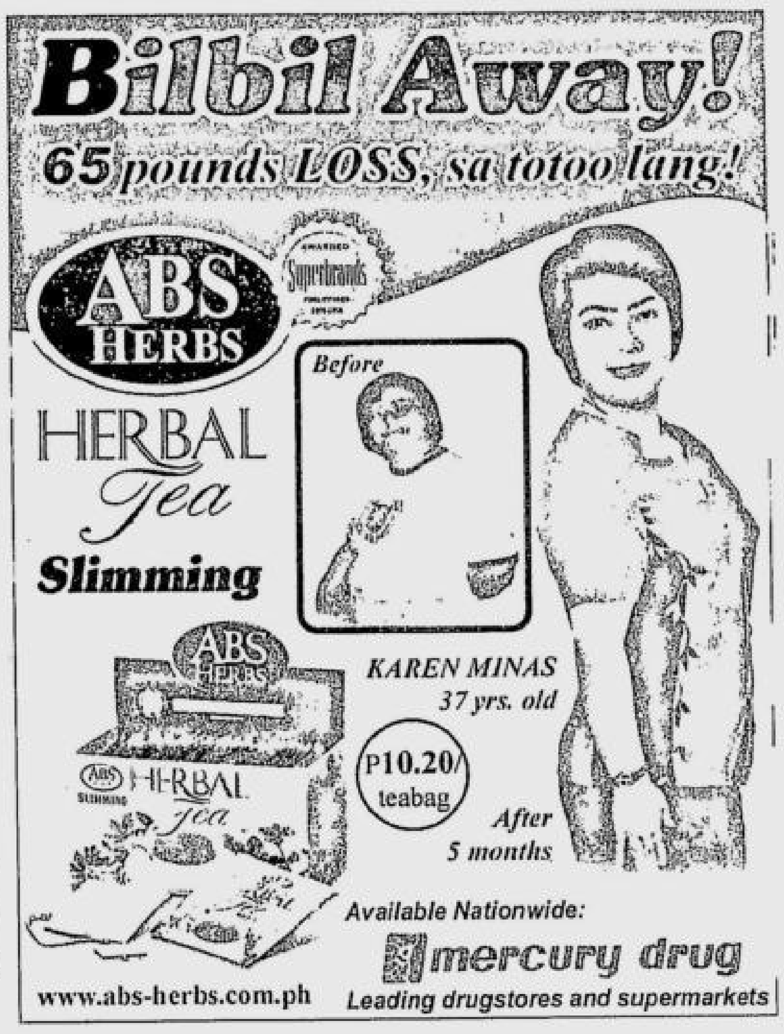
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400 farmers take over land in Pampanga

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

LUBAO, PAMPANGA—AT THE BREAK OF dawn and as thick fog carpeted farms here on Saturday, about 400 farmers occupied portions of a 207-hectare piece of private sugar land, angry over the delay in the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in the last 20 years.

Gunshots fired by 15 men believed to be estate security guards rang in the air as the farmers began pitching tents at the Unson estate in Barangay Prado Siongco.

The men carried pistols and rifles and their faces were covered with ski masks, the farmers said.

"Do not retreat," Dante Belleza, chair of the Barangay Agrarian Reform Council (BARC), told the farmers.

Francisco Ronquillo, vice chair of the Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Prado Siongco, said the group decided to occupy the land when representatives of Mercantile Insurance Co., the court-approved administrator of the estate, failed to show titles of land ownership in past meetings. The representatives did not also show up in a meeting on Feb. 7, he said.

The estate belonged originally to the Dimson family. It was transferred to Ma. Anicia Unson in 1982 and administered by Eric Abellera.

The new owner died in October 2005 shortly after the Department of Agrarian Reform placed the estate under CARP for the tenants there, according to the BARC leaders.

Because Unson had no heirs and Abellera owed Mercantile, Judge David Mirando Jr. of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court granted Mercantile the right to administer the estate.

The firm planned to use it on the strength of an environmental clearance certificate issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on March 14, 1995, and a certificate of conversion by the DAR on April 26, 1995.

Belleza said the conversion was not approved by the barangay council.

On Oct. 21, 2003, then Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan denied the motion of the farmers to cancel the conversion.

"Our claim to this land has taken 20 years. Many of the former tenants have died," said Pedro Pedrosa, 68. He was one of three farmers accused of arson 10 years ago.

"It was blamed on us when their guards burned the grass here," Pedrosa said. He began clearing a plot to hopefully start growing vegetables.

It puzzled Belleza why the CARP has taken too long to proceed when portions of the estate were covered by Presidential Decree No. 27, the land reform law during the Marcos administration.

Belleza told police that the farmers would pay the land.

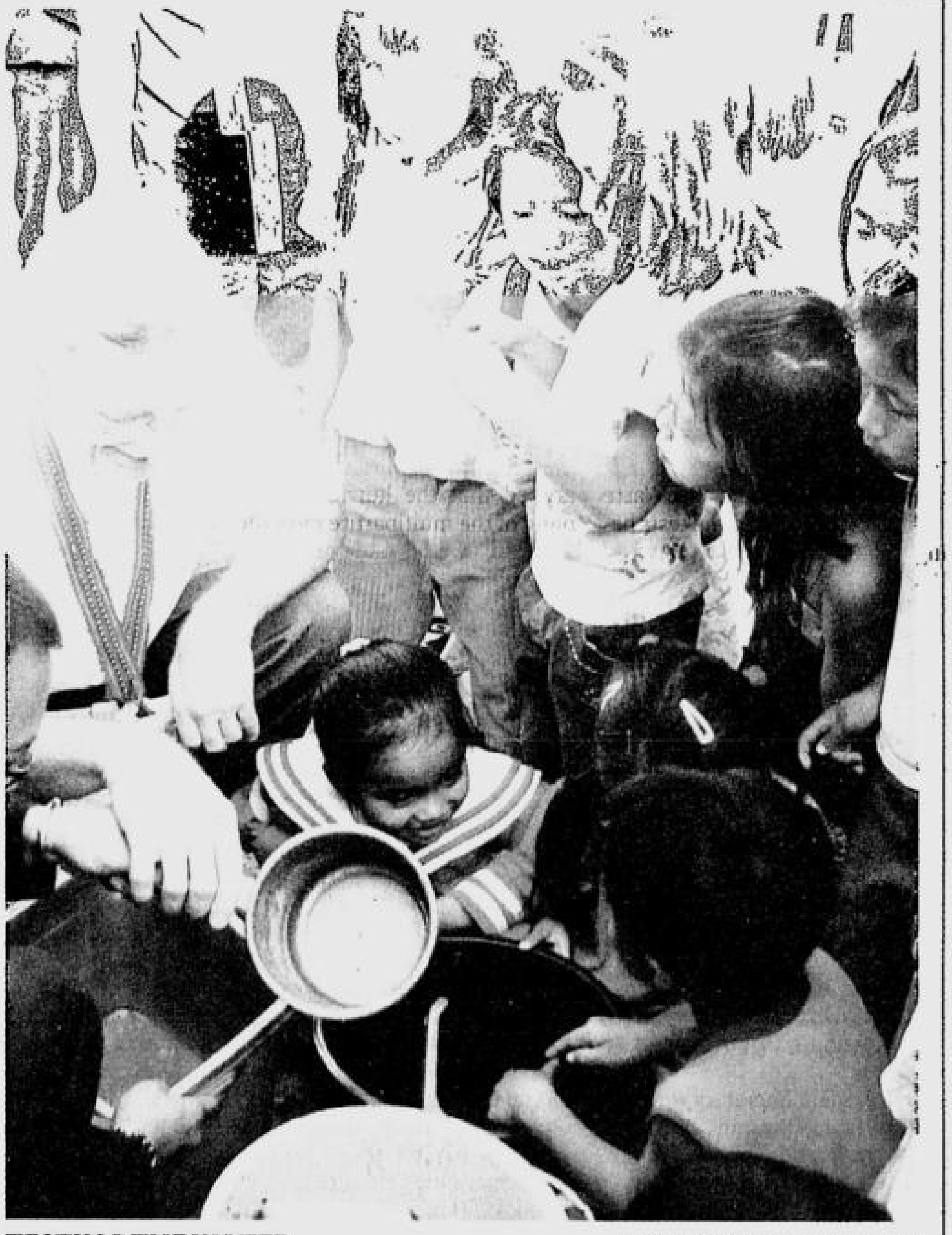
"Those people at Mercantile couldn't even show us proof of their ownership so how can we recognize them? Tenants have greater rights to claim these lands," Belleza said during the negotiations with policemen.

Policemen ordered the armed men to withdraw. Some farmers went to the Lubao police station to report that the guards were carrying firearms while a gun ban is imposed during the election period.

Ronquillo found it ironic that the Department of Agriculture used 100 hectares in the estate to plant corn under President Macapagal-Arroyo's Ginintuang Masaganang Ani while the land dispute was ongoing.

Representatives of Mercantile could not be reached for comment on Saturday.

By 10 a.m., six policemen kept guard to prevent a scuffle between the farmers and the guards.



TESTING THE WATER
EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON
Ibaloi children test the water flowing from a new faucet. Australian Ambassador Tony Hely inaugurated the water system which serves villagers living inside the Camp John Hay forest reservation. Many of the beneficiaries are Ibaloi folk.

Farmer leader hacked in Bondoc Peninsula

LUCENA CITY—AGRARIAN RELATED VIOLENCE has erupted anew in the Bondoc Peninsula in Quezon province after a suspected hired goon of one of the biggest landlords in the area repeatedly hacked a farmer leader, a farmers group said Thursday.

Danny Carranza, officer of the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (Peace) Foundation, said Heliolito "Yoly" Abrenica, 43, was on his way home to Barangay Butanguiad in San Francisco town on Tuesday when he was attacked by a certain Otoy Peros.

Quoting witnesses, Carranza said the victim was walking along with his wife, brother and brother-in-law, when they passed by the suspect's house.

"It was then that the suspect began attacking Yoly with his bolo, without any provocation. Though the latter tried to run for safety, Peros was still able to hit him on the back and head, causing Yoly to fall on the ground," Carranza said.

"Yoly tried to defend himself with his arms and hands. It was at this point that Peros hit the victim's left arm, slicing it off completely," he added.

Abrenica also received multiple hack wounds in the head and body, Carranza said.

He said the attacker casually walked away from the crime scene when the victim's relatives arrived.

The victim was rushed to a hospital and has been declared out of danger.

Carranza stressed that the incident was the latest case in an increasing number of agrarian-related human rights violations.

He said Abrenica and his group, all members of the Samahan ng mga Magsasaka, Magniniyog at Magmamais sa Hacienda Matias, have been working to place part of the 1,800-hectare Hacienda Matias under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

But because of this, Abrenica and his fellow tenant-petitioners became the target of attacks by landowners' goons, Carranza said.

"In fact, Abrenica even has a pending homicide case against Peros which he filed before the Quezon prosecutor's office after an earlier attack two years ago. The case, however, has yet to be resolved by authorities," he said.

The Matias family has filed several criminal cases against Abrenica's group, including qualified theft, trespassing and malicious mischief.

The peasant group demanded that Peros be arrested by police and asked for government protection for Abrenica, his family and the witnesses to the crime. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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Calbayog priests to help girl found dead in fire

By Cyrain G. Cabuenas
Inquirer Visayas

CATBALOGAN, SAMAR—THE MOTHER of a 14-year-old girl who was found dead inside a razed supermarket is now scrounging for funds after learning that the criminal case she filed against the establishment's owners may be moved to Manila.

Mary Jean Paulin, 35, of Allen Avenue, this town, has filed a criminal complaint against Dr. Leo Lofranco and his wife Grace at the provincial prosecutor's office.

Paulin accused the couple of murder and violation of the Child Abuse Act (Republic Act No. 7610).

Her daughter's charred remains were found among the ashes of Lester Lace supermarket, which was engulfed by fire on the night of Nov. 14.

Accusations

The Lofrancos said the accusations against them had no factual basis.

In a statement released over a local radio station and a tabloid, the Lofrancos said they deemed it wise not to add comments since they could be used to fabricate more lies against them.

"We condemn these false rumors and we have been informed that witnesses have been lined up against us with fabricated allegations," the statement said.

The couple also maintained that the fire had resulted in a huge financial loss for them, but recognized that this could not compare to the loss of a loved one.

They noted that allowing "these lies to thrive is to do a grave injustice not only to our family but to the public at large, who deserves nothing but the truth."

Help

Paulin is looking for Good Samaritans who can assist her plight if the case is transferred to Manila.

"The little savings I had are all gone and I am now knee-deep in debt. If the case will be transferred to Manila, surely I'll have no chance of winning because I can't afford the fare for I have to take care of my eight other kids. And my youngest even needs treatment for a malignant tumor," she said.

It took Paulin a month to file the case for lack of support and witnesses.

"I really wonder if the poor gets justice for very few would like to testify and some were being bribed by the Lofrancos. When I approached the police officers and the NBI lawyer conducting the investigation, they told me that my daughter Janine was a looter," she said.

Movement for Janine

The bishop and the priests of Calbayog diocese have spearheaded a Justice for Janine Movement (JJM) upon hearing about the case.

Fr. Roland Cajegas, spokesperson of the JJM, said he and other priests volunteered to help Mary Jean for they wanted the truth out.

Episcopal Administrator Archbishop Jose Palma said the Calbayog clergy will help in the pursuit of justice for Janine.

"This is pure murder and abuse of power by the elite," he said. Palma has also tapped some other bishops to look into the case.

An autopsy report of a certain Teddy Yboa of NBI Manila said the victim died due to the fire and carbon monoxide poisoning.

However, a separate medico-legal report by Dr. Felino Gualdrapa of Samar Provincial Hospital showed that the cause of death was asphyxiation by suffocation or choking and that Janine was already dead when she got burned.

Medico-legal

Gualdrapa said the cause of death concluded by Yboa was impossible because there were no traces of carbon in Janine's lungs.

Chief medico-legal Dr. Angel Cordero of chief medico-legal of the PNP regional crime laboratory conducted another autopsy and affirmed Gualdrapa's report. Both said there were also contusions on Janine's skull and cheeks.

After the JJM was formed, many witnesses have come forward.

Samson Rosales said he saw Janine at a pizza house with Dr. Leo Lofranco before the latter's supermarket was razed. He said he also saw Grace Lofranco slap and drag Janine outside.

Catbalogan parish priest Jun Cinco said the Diocese of Calbayog would be behind Janine's case.

"If this case will be transferred to Manila then justice will not only be expensive but also elusive for the poor," he said.

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Groups score incinerator's test run

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—ENVIRONMENT activists, Church groups and residents of this city have assailed the ongoing emission test run of a waste treatment facility here, saying it only poses health risks to them and may result in environment degradation.

In a joint statement sent to the INQUIRER, the Cavite Green Coalition (CGC) and the EcoWaste Coalition (EWC) said the tests being conducted by Integrated Waste Management Inc. (IWMI) in Barangay Aguado was hastily allowed by authorities.

On Thursday, students, community leaders, Catholic nuns and environmental health advocates joined a prayer rally to show their disgust over the trial operations of the waste facility.

They insisted that the operation of incinerators was prohibited under the Clean Air Act of 1999 and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Ochie Tolentino, CGC coordinator, said the groups also doubted the sincerity of the waste facility's operators to make the results of the tests transparent and available to other concerned parties.

"We are convinced that IWMI is not sincere in conducting a conclusive test of emissions and in making sure that the test results generated are reliable, independently verifiable and properly documented," said Tolentino.

The trial testing of the incinerator began on Feb. 6 after its operators were able to secure a temporary restraining order from a cease-and-desist order issued by the Environmental Management Bureau in 2005.

EMB investigators issued the order after IWMI failed to submit the results of two previous emission tests. The operators subsequently admitted an error in the sampling of the pollutants tested.

"IWMI has a previous history of testing emissions and never bothering to report," Tolentino added.

Merci Ferrer, coordinator of the Health Care Without Harm, argued that the hurried assembling of the multipartite monitoring team (MMT) with no proper technical preparation only "lays the groundwork for the greenwashing of the IWMI incinerator."

"No effort has been made to make sure that the MMT is technically proficient to monitor the tests being made," she said.

Ferrer said without technical preparation, the MMT would only be just a "rubber stamp" for the IWMI.

A study done in 2005 showed that the eggs from free-range chickens found near the incinerator of IWMI were found to have high levels of dioxin which was three times the limit set by the European Union.

Manny Calonzo, coordinator of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, explained that incinerators pose a risk to public health and the environment as these facilities are known to emit hundreds of toxic byproducts like heavy metals and particulates.

"Dioxin, the most notorious man-made chemical poison, can cause or worsen a wide range of extremely serious health problems such as cancer and disorders in the immune, reproductive and developmental systems," he warned. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Pangasinan mayors ask PNP not to remove police chief

DAGUPAN CITY—PANGASINAN mayors have asked police chief Oscar Calderon to reconsider his decision to relieve the provincial police director here, saying the official has earned the respect of local officials and the community.

In a petition that was also addressed to President Macapagal-Arroyo, at least 25 mayors said they were satisfied with the performance of the Pangasinan police under the leadership of Senior Supt. Alan Purisima.

They said they were supporting Purisima's stay in office until his two-year tour of duty ends in June.

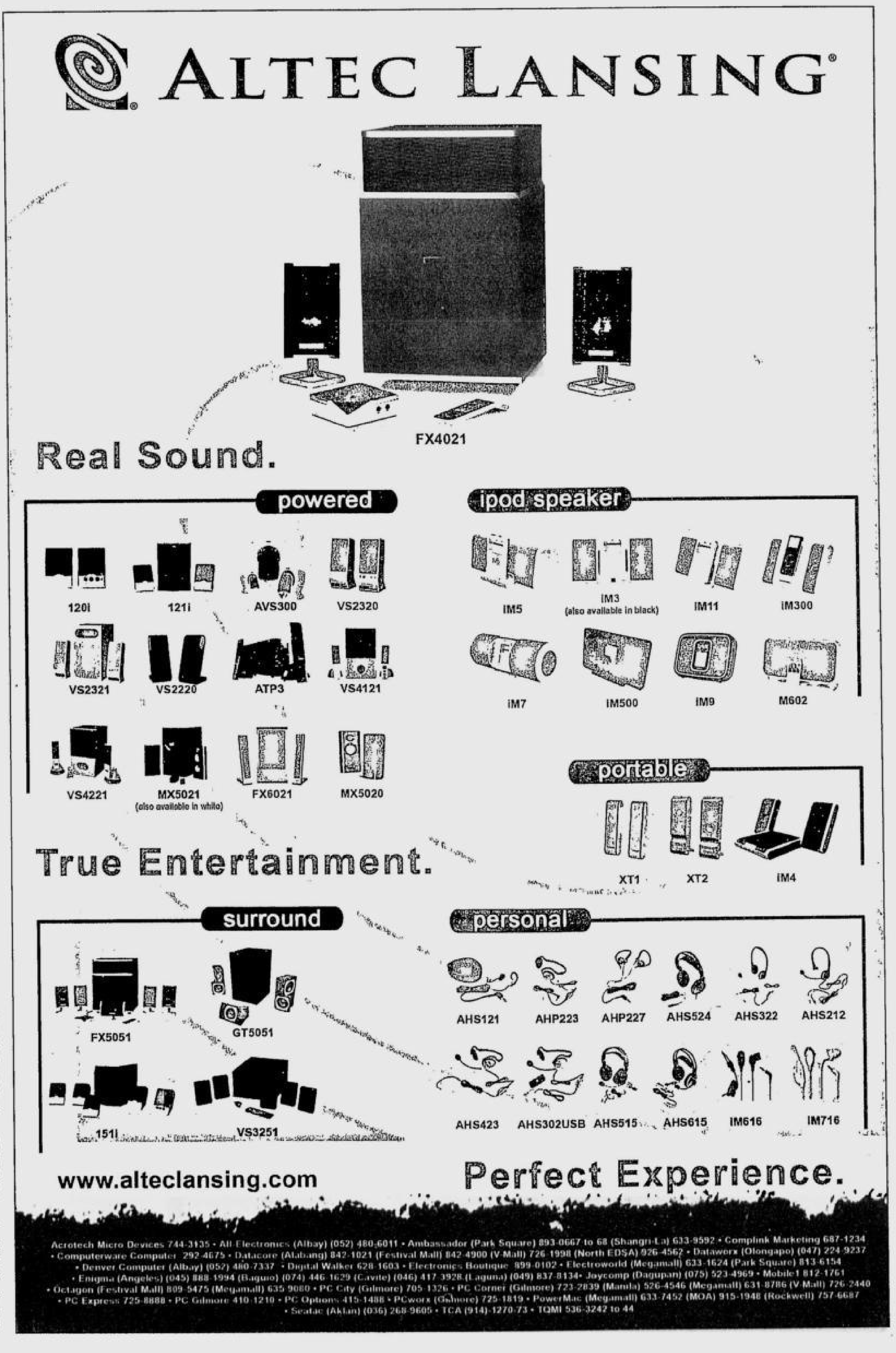
Local businessmen also appealed for Purisima's retention, noting reports of his impending relief came days after the police raided a suspected shabu den in Urdaneta City.

"Is this the way the government and police authorities treat officials who are doing their work well?" asked Rosendo So, president of the Eastern Pangasinan Chinese-Filipino Chamber of Commerce.

Local officials and businessmen said the provincial police also scored a major accomplishment with the recent capture in Bolinao town of a suspected leader of a kidnap-for-ransom syndicate and the "clearing" of Rosales town as a drop-off point of illegal drugs.

Calderon earlier announced that 38 provincial police directors were relieved because they have completed their two-year assignments in their respective areas.

The PNP's senior officers promotion and placement board has reportedly approved Purisima's relief and has sought clearance from the Commission on Elections to implement the order. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



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Why 'Kiko' is 'going solo'

By Cynthia D. Balana

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan is going solo in the coming senatorial elections because he cannot stomach working with political turncoats both in the administration and the opposition, according to a highly placed source.

The source, who talked at length with Pangilinan on the reason behind his refusal to join the Team Unity ticket of the administration and the United Opposition, said Pangilinan believed that it would be more complicated to be with either of the two coalitions than just going independent.

Pangilinan had called for the resignation of both deposed President Joseph Estrada and President Macapagal-Arroyo during their respective impeachment trials.

The source said that Pangilinan was concerned that his children might no longer understand what he was fighting for as a politician should he yield to the draft of either of the two for a senatorial slot.

Can't go Erap

"*Iyong mga* administration *dating* opposition, *iyong mga* opposition *dating* administration. *Magulo*," the source quoted the senator as telling him.

"I cannot go Erap because I asked him to resign. I cannot go GMA because I asked her to resign. *Hindi ko maipapaliwanag sa mga anak ko*. So the only way I think my conscience can accept is to go independent," the same source said.

Pangilinan tried to help create a middle way, the source said, but it did not work out.

Sought by the INQUIRER for comment, Pangilinan said he would rather not talk about his reason for not joining the other members of the Wednesday Group in order not to offend some political personalities involved in his predicament.

But he stressed that he was used to fighting lonely battles in the past, being a student-activist during his college years.

Pangilinan was president of the University of the Philippines' Student Council and the first UP Board of Regent student-member with voting power. He earned his Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts in English at the University of the Philippines, and had conducted lectures at the Ateneo de Manila. He earned his Masters in Public Administration at the Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

"I am banking on my track record as senator for six years and the support of my wife and extended family," he said.

Most committee reports

He filed the most number of committee reports during the 12th Congress, and was elected as the youngest Senate majority leader in the history of the Senate since 1937. He is acknowledged as one of the most hardworking and most productive senators

Before becoming Senate Majority Leader, Pangilinan served as chair of the Senate committees on justice and human rights, housing and urban planning, education, and the ethics and public accountability. He is the principal author and sponsor of the Judiciary Compensation and Modernization Act, which doubled the pay and other benefits of judges and justices thereby addressing the issue of huge vacancy rate in many courts.

Pangilinan is married to actress/singer Sharon Cuneta with whom he has two daughters. He has three brothers and five sisters, some of whom are in show business. Singer Garry Valenciano is a brother-in-law.

Pangilinan said KC Concepcion, his wife's daughter in a previous marriage with former matinee idol Gabby Concepcion, might not be able to campaign for him because the latter was studying in Paris.

"I will handle the campaign with much difficulty. Sharon will join me once in a while, not all the time because somebody has to make a living," Pangilinan said in jest.

"In the end, my political life is in the hands of the people," he added.

Opposition fields full Senate lineup

From page A1

The opposition immediately proclaimed its lineup as "a winning team" and said the election would be a referendum on the performance of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We are aiming for (a 12-0 victory) because we have a strong slate with just the right representation," United Opposition (UNO) president and Makati City Major Jejomar Binay told the INQUIRER.

The protagonists

"In a clean and honest election, I am positive that we can make the majority of our candidates win," said opposition campaign manager and San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, who had withdrawn his Senate bid.

Villar, Pangilinan, Coseteng and Trillanes will join the following aspirants in the opposite slate: Sen. Panfilo Lacson, former Senators Loren Legarda and John Osmeña, Representatives Francis Escudero, Alan Peter Cayetano and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's lawyer-son Koko, and the late Sen. Raul Roco's wife Sonia.

Opposing them are Arroyo (representing Kampi), Recto (who will file his candidacy under the Lakas-CMD party), Sen. Edgardo Angara (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino), former Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta (both from the Nationalist People's Coalition), Michael Defensor (Liberal Party) and Lakas boys Bukidnon Rep. Miguel Zubiri, Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Zambales Gov. Vic Magsaysay.

The 11th candidate to come on board for the administration was Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla, who belongs to a well-known political clan in the Visayas.

A balanced team

"We have an ideal balance in the membership of the ticket in terms of qualification, personal profile and even regional representation," presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said in a phone interview.

Designated opposition spokesperson Adel Tamano said no issues were raised against the inclusion of Trillanes in the opposition lineup, during final discussions in Club Filipino in San Juan yesterday.

But other opposition members privy to the discussions said some prominent personalities in the group had reservations about including the alleged mutiny leader, who has filed his candidacy as an independent.

"Trillanes is very idealistic and he has been espousing good governance," Ejercito said, adding that the inclusion of the mutinous officer was "a unanimous decision."

"Trillanes will symbolize the reform in the Armed Forces," former Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, sister of former President Fidel Ramos, told the INQUIRER.

Shahani was also considered for an opposition slot, but she said she begged off because she was not prepared for a national campaign.

3 women

"It is a very good team. It is a winning team. It represents the hopes and aspirations of our people, which is to have a more democratic society," Shahani said.

Coseteng said the slate was a "strong team" and pointed out there were three women in it.

Ejercito said that while the opposition would not have as big a campaign fund and as extensive a political machinery as the administration, the opposition team had the more potent political issues on its side.

"Candidates who joined the team are for truth and justice," he said.

Binay said that all member parties and organizations of the coalition were consulted before UNO finally decided on its senatorial lineup.

"It's a broad coalition. Everybody gave their opinion and, in the end, we had to decide," Binay said.

The inclusion of Pangilinan, Coseteng and Trillanes was a decision made upon consultations with all coalition partners, he said.

Pangilinan expressed surprise at the opposition's decision to include him in its senatorial ticket.

"I have not spoken to anyone in UNO (United Opposition) about this adoption and so I am surprised by the inclusion. I am thankful for the trust UNO has shown to me," he said.

"Still I consider myself an independent candidate. Should I be reelected, I am ready to work with the opposition or the administration on an issue-to-issue basis as I have done so in the Senate these past two years."

Villar himself stressed he would remain independent despite his inclusion in the opposition ticket.

Ms Arroyo hosted lunch yesterday for the administration candidates.

Only Singson was not present in the lunch at Ms Arroyo's Makati residence. Singson was still recuperating from abdominal surgery but sent his son Ronald to represent him.

"President Arroyo gave warm words of welcome and expressed delight over their being in the lineup," Claudio said.

Claudio described the luncheon as generally "upbeat, relaxed and happy."

Pichay, Sotto and Oreta mingled with each other "as if there was no ice to begin with," Claudio said. He was referring to Pichay's strong opposition to the inclusion of the oppositionists Sotto and Oreta in Team Unity.

'A united country'

Sotto said he only knew for sure that he and Oreta were in the administration slate yesterday when he was informed that the NPC had "formalized" its team-up with the administration coalition.

Sotto said his joining the Team Unity slate was "the best way for a united Philippines."

"Even if we are loyalists of Erap and FPJ (the late actor and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.), they accepted us ... and it's a good step toward reconciliation," he said in a phone interview.

"If FPJ were alive today, he would have supported my move," he said. "FPJ wanted unity in the country."

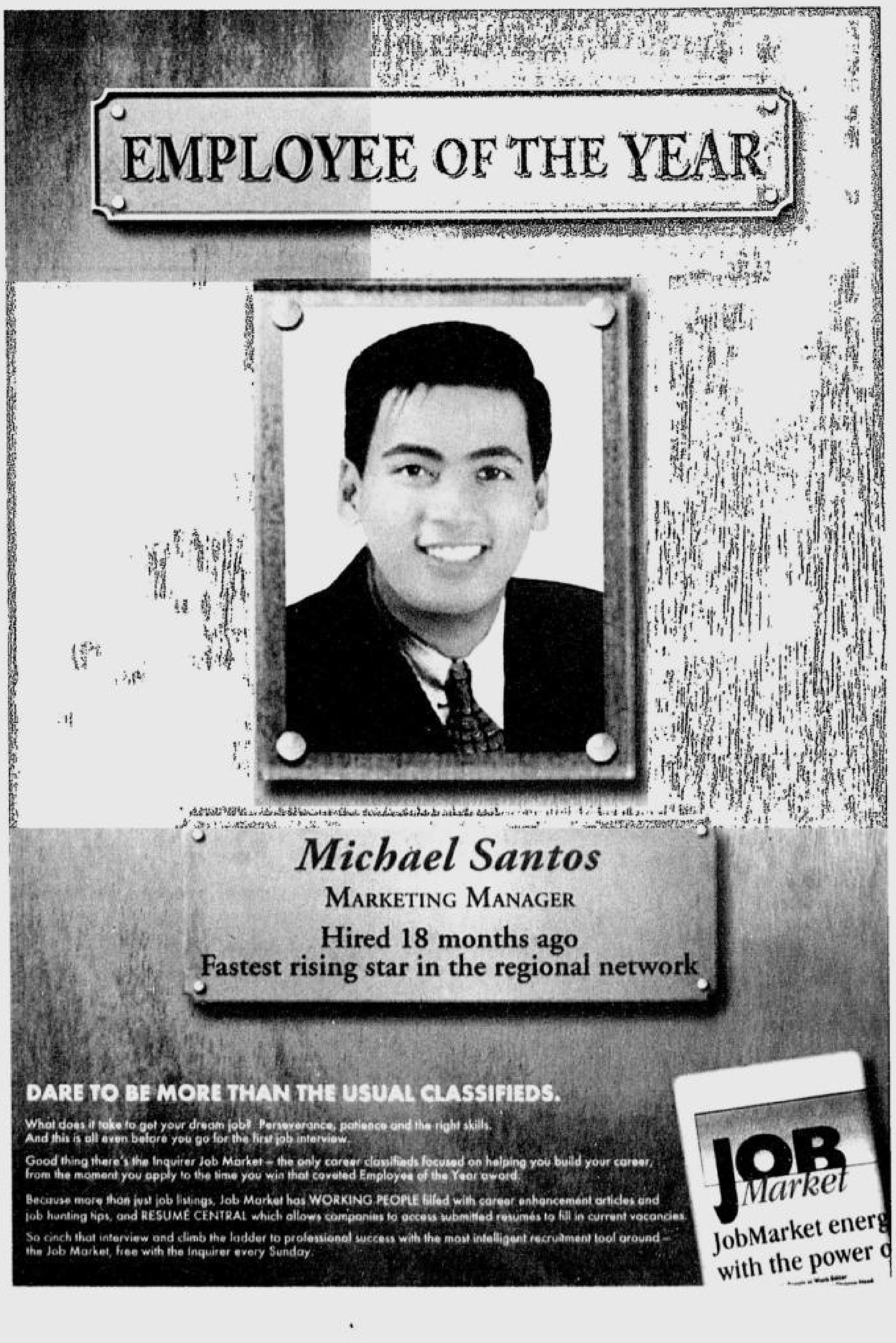
Sotto said Ms Arroyo thanked them for accepting the invitation to run in the administration ticket.

"She was expressing gratitude to the members of the slate ... and she talked of the goal to continue with the economic gains and achieve reconciliation," he said.

He said Team Unity was a "very good combination of oppositionists, Arroyo loyalists who represent all sectors and regions."

"It's up to the people to decide," Sotto said when asked about the chances of the senatorial ticket.

Team Unity will have Reli German as campaign manager and Mike Toledo as campaign spokesperson, according to Claudio. Both German and Toledo were previously identified with jailed former President Joseph Estrada. *With reports from Tarra V. Quismundo, Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio*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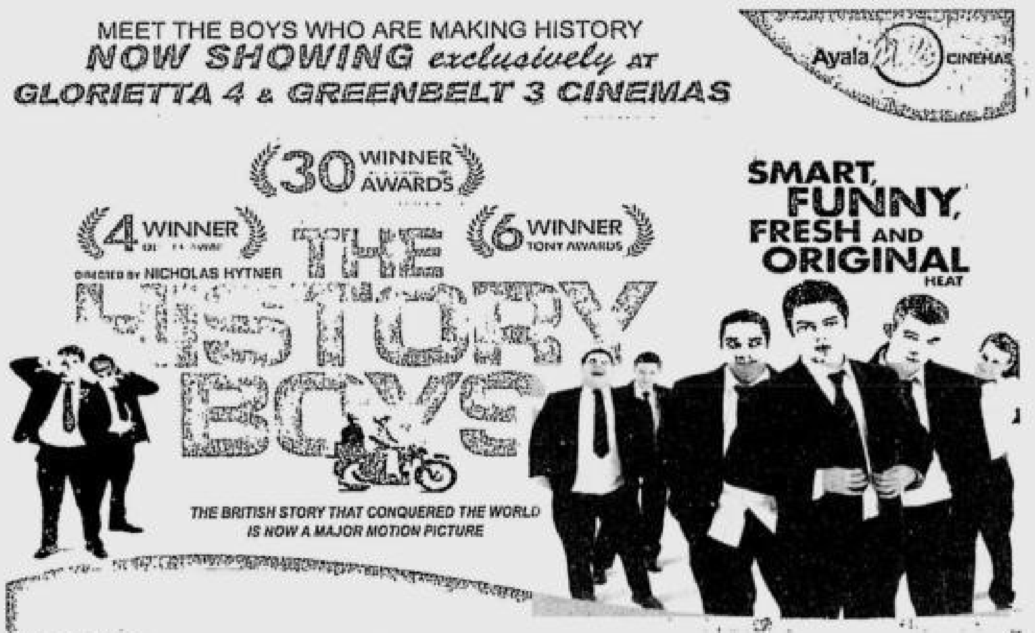
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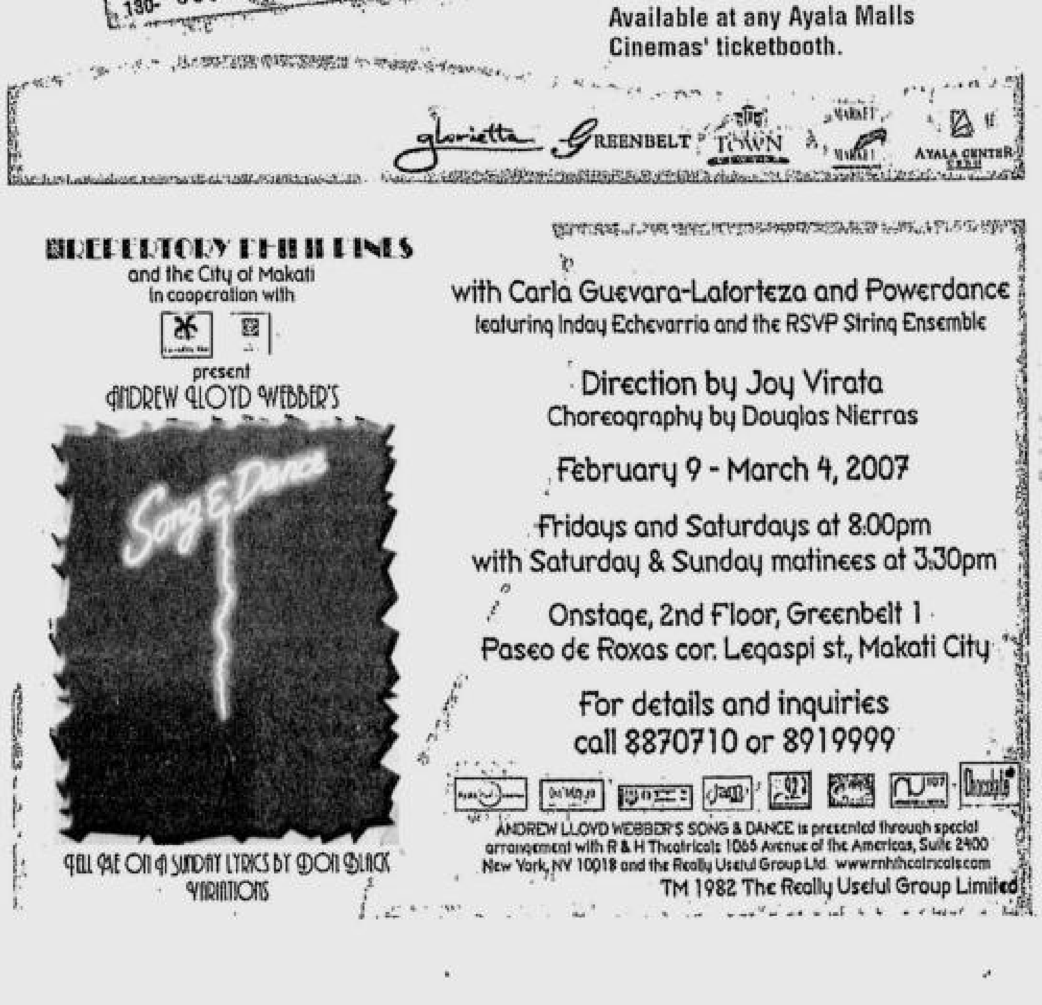
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NO DEAL!

Farmers decry agri deals with China

FARMERS belonging to various organizations demanded the junking of the 19 agreements entered into by Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap with various Chinese firms which they said were tantamount to "selling off national patrimony and food security."

In a picket-rally in front of the Department of Agriculture offices in Quezon City, leaders of the Ugnayan ng Nagsasariling Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (UNORKA), Alliance for Rural Concerns, Pambansang Katipunan ng Makabayang Magbubukid (PKMM), Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD) and Foodfirst Information Action Network (FIAN-Philippines) said the agreements recently brokered by Yap with the Chinese seriously jeopardizes the interest of the country.

They said allowing the Chinese to use 1.24 million hectares of land in the Philippines to raise rice, corn, sorghum, vegetables and other crops for China's consumption violates the agrarian reform law and reverses attempts at attaining food security through self-sufficiency in production.

"Where would Yap get the 1.24 million hectares he wants to give away to the Chinese? There are no more idle alienable and disposable public lands. If there are, these should be made available first and foremost to the landless Filipino farmers. Yap may have to give away the farms already being tilled by our farmers," said the joint statement of the three organizations.

They said that since the crops that will be grown by the Chinese would be for their exclusive consumption, the supply of locally-produced food for Filipino consumers will be greatly impaired. "We may have to buy from the Chinese food products that are ironically produced in our own land. It is the classic case of *ginigisa tayo sa sariling mantika,*" they said.

They said Filipinos have nothing to gain from the agreements. "It should be noted that the P240 billion Yap said the Chinese will invest here would be used by the Chinese to grow food products for themselves. Thus the investments are for themselves, not the Filipinos," they stressed.

They also said that because the Chinese would be using intensive farming methods, they would not care about the environmental degradation they would cause on the lands. "Our future generation will be left with poisoned barren lands," they added.

"The deal is worse than the RP-US Military Bases Agreement, which the Filipino people junked," the farmers said.

Fishers rap Yap on Chinese poachers release

IRATE fishermen belonging to the Progresibong Alyansa ng Mangingisda ng Pilipinas (PANGISDA-Pilipinas) called for the ouster of agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap for allegedly causing the release and non-filing of charges against 30 Chinese fishermen caught poaching recently at the Tubbataha Reef Park in Palawan.

The group said the release of the Chinese fishermen was a "sweetener" to the 19 deals entered into by yap with China, which include the leasing off of 1.24 million hectares of land to the Chinese. China would use the lands to produce food like rice, corn, sorghum and vegetables for its booming population.

There were earlier reports that the Chinese embassy in Manila wrote to Yap and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romuno for the immediate release of the Chinese poachers who were caught last December with live Napoleon wrasse (mameng), an endangred species, explosives and toxic substances. The fishermen said they received reports that Yap allegedly interceded on behalf of the Chinese.

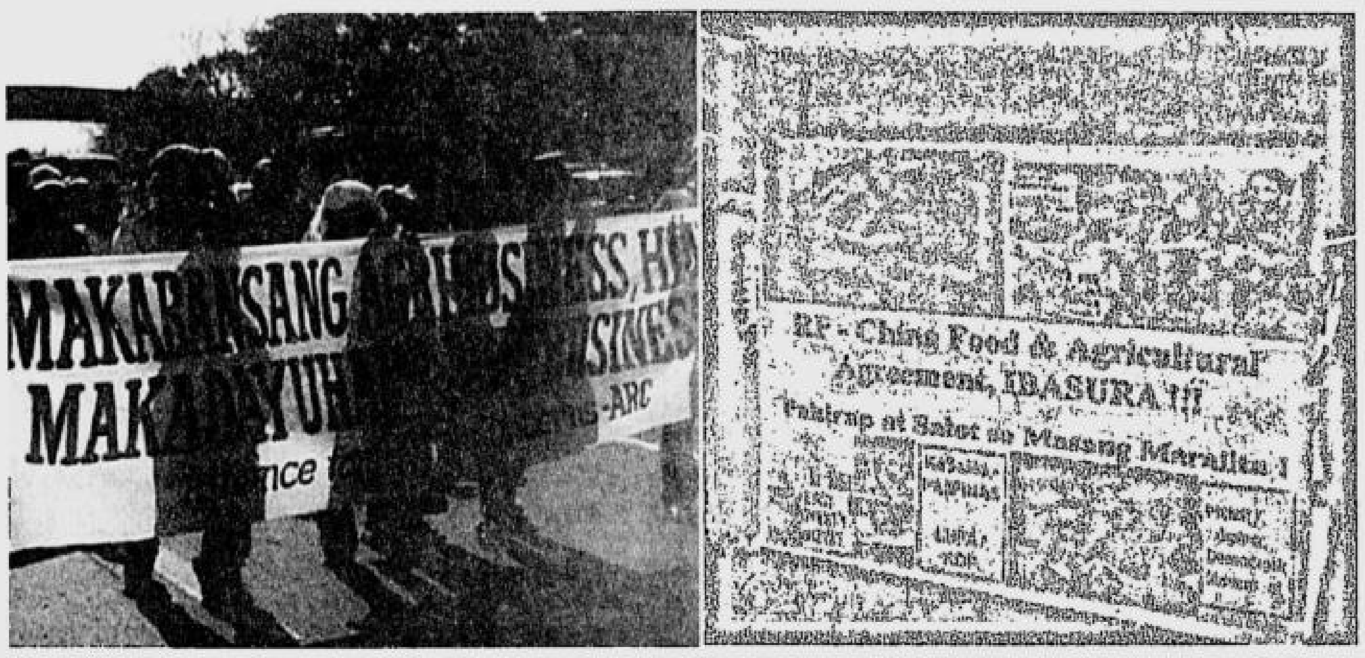
Even the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-Philippines) also earlier asked for deeper investigations over the incident, warning that the poachers could be part of an organized crime syndicate. A local judge ordered the release of the Chinese after being detained for only a few hours.

The case became even more controversial after local authorities in Palawan where the poachers were caught alleged that Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales ordered the provincial prosecutor's office not to file charges against the Chinese. Gonzales denied the allegations.

According to the fishermen, Yap worked on the release of the Chinese poachers to appease visiting Chinese officials led by Prime Minister Wen Jaibao.

The group also decried agreements signed by Yap which allows China virtual access to Philippine fishing grounds in the guise of fishery breeding and culture. Among the 19 agreements entered into by Yap with China calls for the commercial raising of grouper, abalone, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, scallops and other high-value marine species.

"With the agreements brokered by Yap, the Philippines will become a mere garden and fishpond for China. Poaching will no longer become an issue because China would be in virtual control over our seas and waters," the fishermen said.


MAKABANSANG
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RP - China Food & Agricultural Agreement, IBASURA!!!
Pahirap at Salot sa Masang Maralita!

NO DEAL. Farmers, fishers and their allies cry foul over the 19 agriculture deals with China in a demonstration in front the Department of Agriculture offices in Quezon City. They said the deals are tantamount to selling off of the national patrimony, by granting rights to China to use 1.24 million hectares of Philippine farmlands to produce food for China's booming population.

Yap hit on coco levy fund use

COCONUT farmers belonging to the Ugnayan ng Nagsasariling Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (UNORKA) yesterday told Department of Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap to lay off from the controversial coconut levy fund.

UNORKA revealed that Yap recently got authorization from the President to use the Coconut Industry Development Fund (CIIF) to rehabilitate coconut farms in Bicol and Marinduque that were destroyed by recent typhoons.

The group warned that "Yap's intent on the CIIF has always been suspect." They recalled that Yap tangled with and maneuvered to oust then Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Administrator Evangeline Valbuena "because he wanted to dip his fingers on the CIIF."

"Yap is using the recent typhoon that devastated Bicol as an excuse to get his hands at the CIIF money. He recently asked for and was granted authority to use the CIIF supposedly to rehabilitate coconut farms in Bicol and Marinduque destroyed by recent typhoons," the group said.

"While tens of thousands of people affected by the typhoons suffer, Yap is drooling over the opportunity to finally control the disposition of the coconut levy funds, in the name of the suffering Bicolanos," UNORKA added.

UNORKA also assailed Yap for "selling off the national patrimony and food security" by entering into 19 agreements with China that allows the Chinese to use some 1.24 million hectares of land to produce food for its booming population.

The group said Yap is violating the spirit of the agrarian reform program. They said that instead of giving lands to the landless Filipino farmers, Yap is giving lands to foreigners.

"We rejected corporate farming schemes because local companies would be allowed to amass wide tracts of lands. We are also breaking up large landholdings of the hacienderos, but Yap is giving control to foreigners more than one million hectares of land," the group said.

Under the agreements, Filipinos would only be farm workers, lowly *kasama* and *sacada* all over again. Worse, they will be serving foreign masters this time," the group added.

Stop the sell-out of our national patrimony and food security to China!

IMMEDIATELY after he maneuvered himself back to power at the Department of Agriculture (DA), Secretary Arthur C. Yap wasted no time in selling off to the Chinese the patrimony and food security of the country.

He recently made 19 deals with China, which he negotiated even as he has yet to officially assume office in November last year. The deals allow China to use about 1.24 million hectares of land to produce rice, corn, sorghum, vegetables and other crops exclusively for the consumption of China's booming population.

The agreements also virtually allow full access by China to the country's waters and fishery resources, the guise of research and processing projects. In fact, through the reported intercession of Yap, 30 Chinese fishermen caught poaching in the protected waters of Tubbataha Reef Nature Park with live endangered fish species were immediately released, and the charges against them were reportedly dropped.

Where would Yap get the 1.24 million hectares that he wants to give away to the Chinese? There are no more idle alienable and disposable public lands. If there are, these should be made available first and foremost to landless Filipino farmers. The President has been emphatic on new lands to be opened. "We should give the landless farmers the first option to be there, as part of land reform," she said recently in Bago City.

Yap may have to give away the farms already being tilled by our farmers.

In the past we have rejected the corporate farm schemes of local companies that would have allowed them to amass wide tracts of land. Through the agrarian reform program, albeit defective, we are trying to break up the large landholdings of the hacienderos.

But with the stroke of his pen, Yap is giving away more than a million hectares to foreigners, without even consulting with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) which is still struggling in implementing the defective Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL).

Since the crops that will be grown by the Chinese would be for their exclusive consumption, the supply of locally-produced food for Filipino consumers will be greatly impaired. We may have to buy from the Chinese food products that are ironically produced in our own land. It is the classic case of *ginigisa tayo sa sariling mantika*.

By disabling the country to produce its own food, Yap is actually reversing everything that most of his predecessors at the DA tried to do – which was to strengthen national food security through self-sufficiency in the production of basic food commodities.

In proudly announcing and yapping about his treasonous deals, Yap tries to bedazzle us with the supposed investments by the Chinese in Philippine agriculture and fisheries. He said the 19 deals would bring in P240 billion in Chinese investments. But it should be noted that the P240 billion would be used by the Chinese to grow food products for themselves. Thus the investments are for their own benefit, not the Filipinos.

If at all, the Filipinos would only be farm workers, lowly *kasama* and *sacada* all over again. Worse, they will be serving foreign masters this time.

Because the Chinese would be using intensive methods, they would not care about the environmental degradation they would cause on the lands, which they would abandon anyway after their lease agreements shall have expired. Our future generation will be left with poisoned barren lands.

Yap had the gall and gumption to declare that he was able to get 5,000 square meters of space from the Jiangnan Wholesale Market for Philippine fruit products – in exchange of 1.24 million hectares of Filipino land, not mention our waters, that he would give away to the Chinese!

During his controversial first stint as DA secretary, Yap tangled with and maneuvered to oust then Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Administrator Evangeline Valbuena because he wanted to dip his fingers on the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF). Now that he also succeeded in grabbing back his former post as DA secretary, Yap may just succeed in controlling the coconut levy funds.

Yap is using the recent typhoon that devastated Bicol as an excuse to get his hands at the CIIF money. He recently asked for and was granted authority to use the CIIF supposedly to rehabilitate coconut farms in Bicol and Marinduque that were destroyed by recent typhoons. While tens of thousands of people affected by the typhoons suffer, Yap is drooling over the opportunity to finally control the disposition of the coconut levy funds, the name of the suffering Bicolanos.

WE ARE THUS calling for the junking of the agreements made by Yap with the Chinese that seriously jeopardizes the interest of the country. He should be made accountable for entering into one-sided agreements that are tantamount to selling off the country's national patrimony and food security. These are serious charges that should result in his ouster as DA secretary, and the filing of appropriate charges against him.

Yap should also be desisted from the control and disposition of the coconut levy funds, which belong to the coconut farmers. Yap's intent on the CIIF has always been suspect.

Likewise, he should be made accountable for the mysterious release of the Chinese poachers who were caught in Tubbataha Reef, a world heritage no less. We dread thinking that poaching would be tolerated in the same manner as smuggling of agriculture and food products proliferated during Yap's watch at the Department of Agriculture.

To be able to project our issues, which we believe are most relevant, we are forced to buy space to let our people know of the repercussions of the deals entered into by Secretary Yap with China:

Alliance for Rural Concerns (ARC), Ugnayan ng Nagsasariling Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (UNORKA), Foodfirst Information and Action Network-Philippines (FIAN-Philippines), Alternative Community-Centered Organization for Rural Development (ACCORD), Kalipunan ng mga Samahang [illegible] ng Pilipinas (KASAMA-Pilipinas), Progresibong Alyansa ng Mangingisda ng Pilipinas (PANGISDA-Pilipinas), Pambansang Katipunan ng Makabayang Magbubukid (PKMM), ALAB KATIPUNAN, League of Urban Poor for Action (LUPA), Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD), Filipino Democratic Movement (FILDEM), AGAPE-Southern Tagalog, Quezon Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (QUARRDS), Bicol hegemony for Empowerment and Rural Developemnt (B-HEARD, Inc.), PROGRESSO-Iloilo, Negros Occidental Federation of Farmers Association, Mindanao Farmers Development Center (MFDC). UNORKA-Mindanao. PADAYON, Samahan ng Maliliit na Mangingisda – Aniban ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (SAMAMA-AMA), Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan-Samahan ng Maliliit na Mangingisda ng Calatagan (PKSK-SAMMACA).

ADVT

Cebu, Bulacan governors leave Lakas

From page A1

Luis Villafuerte said Garcia and De la Cruz had sought the endorsement of Kampi.

"They have a proposal to align with Kampi. But we have not accepted them yet. An arbitration committee will decide on that," Villafuerte said.

Infighting

Lakas and Kampi—the two biggest parties in the administration coalition—have been riven with infighting, prompting Ms Arroyo to step in last week.

The President ordered the formation of an arbitration panel to solve conflicts between coalition members running for the same post in the local government or in Congress.

Other members of the ruling coalition are the Nationalist People's Coalition and the Liberal Party wing of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Villafuerte called an emergency meeting of coalition leaders today to discuss the realignment of their forces.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, Lakas national president, said there was no exodus of Lakas local officials to Kampi.

Party switching expected

De Venecia said party-switching within the "grand coalition of parties" was expected and would not hurt the administration's chances in the midterm elections on May 14.

"We're losing two governors, but we just got 12 governors three weeks ago," said the Speaker when reached by phone while inaugurating several infrastructure projects in his native Pangasinan.

Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. of Surigao del Sur downplayed the move by the governor of Cebu, which gave Ms Arroyo a one-million lead over the late opposition presidential standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. in the 2004 presidential election.

Immaterial

Pichay, an administration senatorial candidate, said Garcia's move was "immaterial" because all coalition members were solidly behind the leadership of the President.

He said movements within the coalition were expected because of local politics, but at the end of the day, "all coalition members will support administration bets, especially the members of the Unity Ticket senatorial slate."

Opposition Rep. Rolex Suplico of Iloilo has a different take on Garcia and De la Cruz's defection to Kampi.

"The May elections are, among others, a political fight between Kampi and Lakas. This has already started this early as proven by the exodus of Lakas congressmen to Kampi," said Suplico in a phone interview.

At the launching of One Cebu on Saturday, Garcia stressed the need for Cebuanos to be unified against attempts to divide Cebu.

Three opposition members of the House of Representatives earlier filed separate bills seeking to create three more provinces.

The so-called Sugbuak bills have been strongly opposed not just by Garcia and her allies but also by the business sector, civil society and the Catholic Church.

Recently, Cebuano anti-Sugbuak legislators led by Rep. Eduardo Gullas (1st district) announced that the three bills filed by Representatives Clavel Asas-Martinez (4th district), Antonio Yapha (3rd district) and Simeon Kintanar (2nd district) were shelved due to lack of time.

Martinez's bill calls for the creation of a Cebu del Norte province comprising the towns of the fourth district and with Bogo as the capital.

CEBU Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia (second, from left) and Vice Gov. Greg Sanchez (to her left) lead allies during the launching of One Cebu party.

JUNJIE MENDOZA/CEBU DAILY NEWS

Yapha, backed by former Sen. John Osmeña, wants an Occidental Cebu province, to consist of the towns in the third district with Toledo City as the capital.

Kintanar wants his district made into Cebu del Sur with Argao as the capital.

Garcia's advocacy to protect Cebu from being split into four provinces have gained support from local officials and political leaders.

At least 577 local politicians in Cebu from mayors down to the councilors took their oath as members of One Cebu on Saturday during which they elected Garcia to be the party president for a three-year term.

Of the 47 municipalities in Cebu, only the elected officials of Tabuelan and Sta. Fe towns did not attend Saturday's mass oath taking.

Two political blocs in Cebu are not joining the alliance under One Cebu—the Barug Alang sa Kauswagan ug Demokrasya (Bakud), the dominant political party in the fifth district led by the Durano clan, and the Alayon party headed by Gullas.

Second-class citizens

Gullas and Bakud leaders led by Rep. Red Durano, however, were guests at One Cebu's launching as their show of support for Garcia's campaign against attempts to divide Cebu.

Guiguinto Mayor Ambrosio Cruz Jr., president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines' chapter in Bulacan, lamented the Lakas decision to accept Pancho into the party.

"We are treated as second-class citizens in Lakas," Cruz said. "We are not consulted on the decisions of the party."

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Pancho for comment on Sunday.

De la Cruz's brother

But a provincial board member said another major reason De la Cruz's group bolted Lakas was the party's decision not to endorse the gubernatorial bid of her brother, Board Member Joselito Andrew Mendoza.

De la Cruz declined to comment on this.

Other local officials said Lakas would support the gubernatorial bid of former Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan, chair of the Philippine International Trading Corp.

Pagdanganan earlier expressed confidence that Lakas would endorse him as its official candidate for governor.

De la Cruz said 21 of 24 mayors and nine board members, who joined her in Kampi, had endorsed her brother's candidacy.

She said the mayors had promised to support Mendoza, president of the Association of Barangay Captains in Bulacan, regardless of their party affiliation.

Mendoza said he, his running mate, Senior Board Member Pacifico Aniag, and local officials who would join his slate would take their oath as Kampi members before Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Kampi president, today.

Difficult situation

Villafuerte acknowledged that the situation in Bulacan, an administration bailiwick, was "very difficult."

"All three contending forces are all for GMA (President Arroyo)—Josie, Obet Pagdanganan and Bulacan Rep. Wilhelmino Sy Alvarado," he said.

Villafuerte said the first meeting of the arbitration committee would be today or Tuesday, "but that will not resolve anything. It will come up with a statement of principle."

Other members of the committee are De Venecia, Rizal Rep. Michael "Jack" Duavit, secretary general of the NPC and Atienza of the LP. *With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas*

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GMA tantrum unwillingness to hear truth

From page A1

press freedom over several presidencies, including Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship, the vindictiveness of Joseph Estrada, as well as that of Ms Arroyo during her crackdown on the press in her declaration of national emergency in February 2006.

Far from intimidating the media, these flashes of intemperance reveal blind spots and vulnerabilities that have plagued her troubled presidency. They show that she is unwilling to know the truth from independent sources, blinding her from making balanced and even politically rewarding decisions.

It is inaccurate to say that Ms Arroyo is less accessible to press interviews among Philippine presidents. Of the post-martial law presidents, she is no more inaccessible to the press than Presidents Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos and Estrada.

Access is not the problem. The problem is the quality of information that flows from presidential press conferences—whether it aids public interest in clarifying issues. Access was restricted to manageable format to prevent the conferences from spinning into chaotic incoherence. The press could possibly have had more access with Estrada, but time spent with him would have been absolutely useless, for he could be using it for spewing one-liners full of nonsense.

President Manuel L. Quezon, famous for his volcanic temper, vented his legendary "*punyeta*" on Malacañang reporters and photographers, whose stories or pictures offended him. President Elpidio Quirino banned Celso Cabrera, Malacañang reporter of the Manila Chronicle, from the Palace for scooping other reporters with a story on Quirino's showdown with Senate President Jose Avelino, who was gunning for the presidency.

Battle for control of news

The issue in the Arroyo outburst at the Palace roundtable forum with the press last week involved the continuing conflict between the press and the presidency over control and news management of public issues.

What provoked the President was that the reporter kept on pressing questions about why the claimed economic growth had not trickled down to the poor. The question was: "Isn't it a concern for you ... that billionaires during the time of Marcos and Ramos are also the billionaires now?" She replied: "Those are political questions. That's the end, thank you." Then, she walked out.

The Palace had requested reporters not to ask about political issues and to limit questions to the topic of the forum—the country's exit from the International Monetary Fund monitoring programs and the economic gains under her administration. This framework already restricted the news agenda and represented a concession from the press.

Earlier, she was asked what she thought was her biggest frustration about the economy. She replied: "I don't think about frustration, I only talk about blessings." She added that the reason economic gains had not been reflected in surveys showing the prevalence of poverty was "you guys keep writing about negative things."

The answer is all wrong. The press is not responsible for the survey findings.

Root of conflict

This matter of negative and positive news is at the bottom of the conflict between media and the presidency over management of the news, which the President wants to control to cast her government in a positive light. It strikes at the heart of the function of a free press to hold the government accountable on any important public issue, not excluding economic issues.

Economic issues are necessarily political issues. The President has asserted that it is her prerogative to decide what is positive news and what is negative. This is unacceptable to the press.

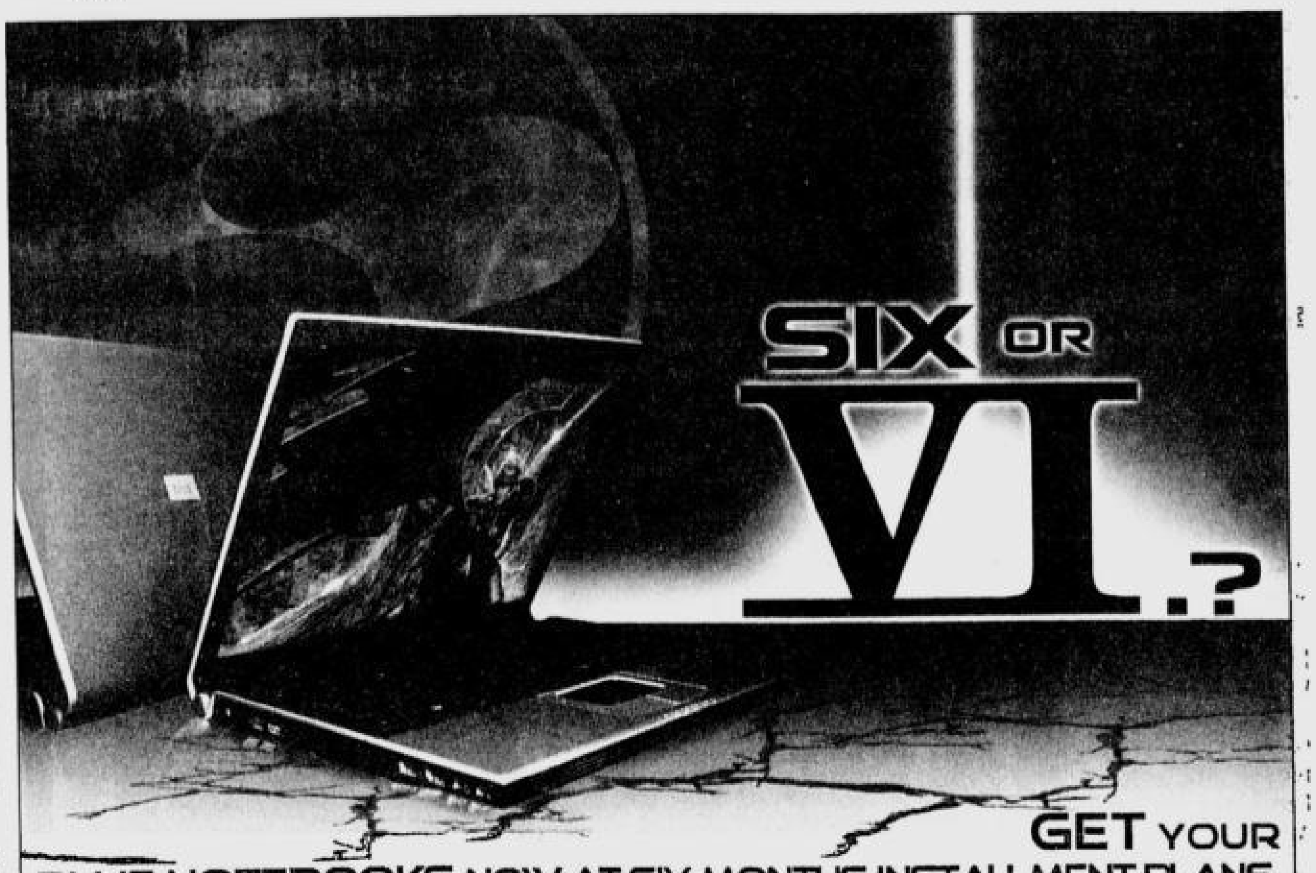
Her answers to reporters' questions reveal a dangerous mind-set that, when translated to political action, has produced a series of policies and decisions resulting in restricting press freedom.

These policies have led to (1) linking the press to political conspiracies seeking to overthrow the government; and (2) to failure of government to halt the wave of extrajudicial killings of journalists during the past six years, of which the government has washed its hands. It has set the tone for impunity from prosecution.

Economics is 'safe'

The President's statements define issues that the government considers taboo to journalistic inquiry. They send the message that, first, economics is "safe," provided that the press does not mix it up with political and even social issues (involving equity); and, second, it asserts the power to define what is positive and negative news.

Through her statements, the President has exposed to the press and her critics that she is weak on these issues. She has claimed that the economy is her forte. This is not so. The question of who gains or loses from economic growth should be pounded by the press. The answers could expose the emptiness of this claim.



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Islamic jurists write sermon against terror

From page A1

Basilan, told the INQUIRER that Islamic terrorists, who barely understood the Koran, often resorted to corrupting its verses to gain support.

"The voice of the unlearned became louder and their lies written longer than the speeches and writings of true scholars," said Utto.

Ustadz Esmael Ebrahim, senior associate of the Dharul Ifta (House of Opinion) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the muftis intended to counter these "lies" when they decided to write the khutba.

Ebrahim said every stand the muftis took on crucial issues would be based on authoritative and authentic Islamic sources.

The muftis, headed by Ustadz Abdulwahid Inju of Tawi-Tawi said the antiterror khutba, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, would be reviewed by other ulama (scholars) for its applicability and social context.

Part of the sermon reads:

"There is nothing in common between a way of life (in Islam) that stands for peace, harmony, order, justice and compassion on the one hand and acts of hatred, vengeance and evil (in terrorism) on the other.

"Indeed, Islam and terrorism stand on opposite ends of the moral spectrum. In Islam, life is so sacred. It is a gift from God that He alone has the right to take back. Murder and the killing of innocent civilians in warfare is strictly forbidden."

Rules of engagement

The sermon also said:

"The Prophet Muhammad himself set the rules of engagement in wars, which were keenly observed by his followers. Muslims cannot dishonor a treaty; they cannot mutilate the dead; they cannot kill women, children, the elderly or any person who does not carry weapons. A Muslim cannot kill those engaged in worship, like monks or priests or Rabbis; we cannot cut down trees or burn crops or poison water supplies. We are only allowed to kill those who physically attack us, (or) intending to kill us."

In all, the muftis of Basilan, Lanao Sur, Maguindanao, Marawi City, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi have written 55 khutbas for all of this year's Friday prayers.

Inju said the muftis wanted the Islamic scholars to deliver the sermons, especially those that condemn terrorism, in all mosques nationwide.

Antiterror bill

The khutba came ahead of the bicameral conference approval Thursday of the antiterror bill, which is to be known as "The Human Security Act."

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon said last week the antiterror bill passed by the bicameral committee still needed "modification."

But Calderon, who visited the ARMM police office in Parang, Shariff Kabunsuan, did not say what provisions of the bill needed modification.

"It is still lacking in few aspects to become effective but as a whole, it is a big boost to campaign of the police and other agencies against terror," he said.

Calderon lauded lawmakers for adopting the measure, which he described as an antidote to the global threat of terrorism.

Safeguards

"I am also glad that there are safeguards in place in the bill to ensure that terror suspects are not abused by arresting officers," he said.

Under the approved bill, Calderon said suspected terrorists could be detained for three days without charges.

He said arresting officers could also be fined P500,000 for wrongfully detaining a suspect.

"These are more than enough for the police and the military and other arresting officers to be cautious before conducting an arrest," Calderon said.

"This (bill) is good, it makes us lawmen more conscious of our duty to respect the rights of every citizen," he added. *With reports from Charlie C. Señase and Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

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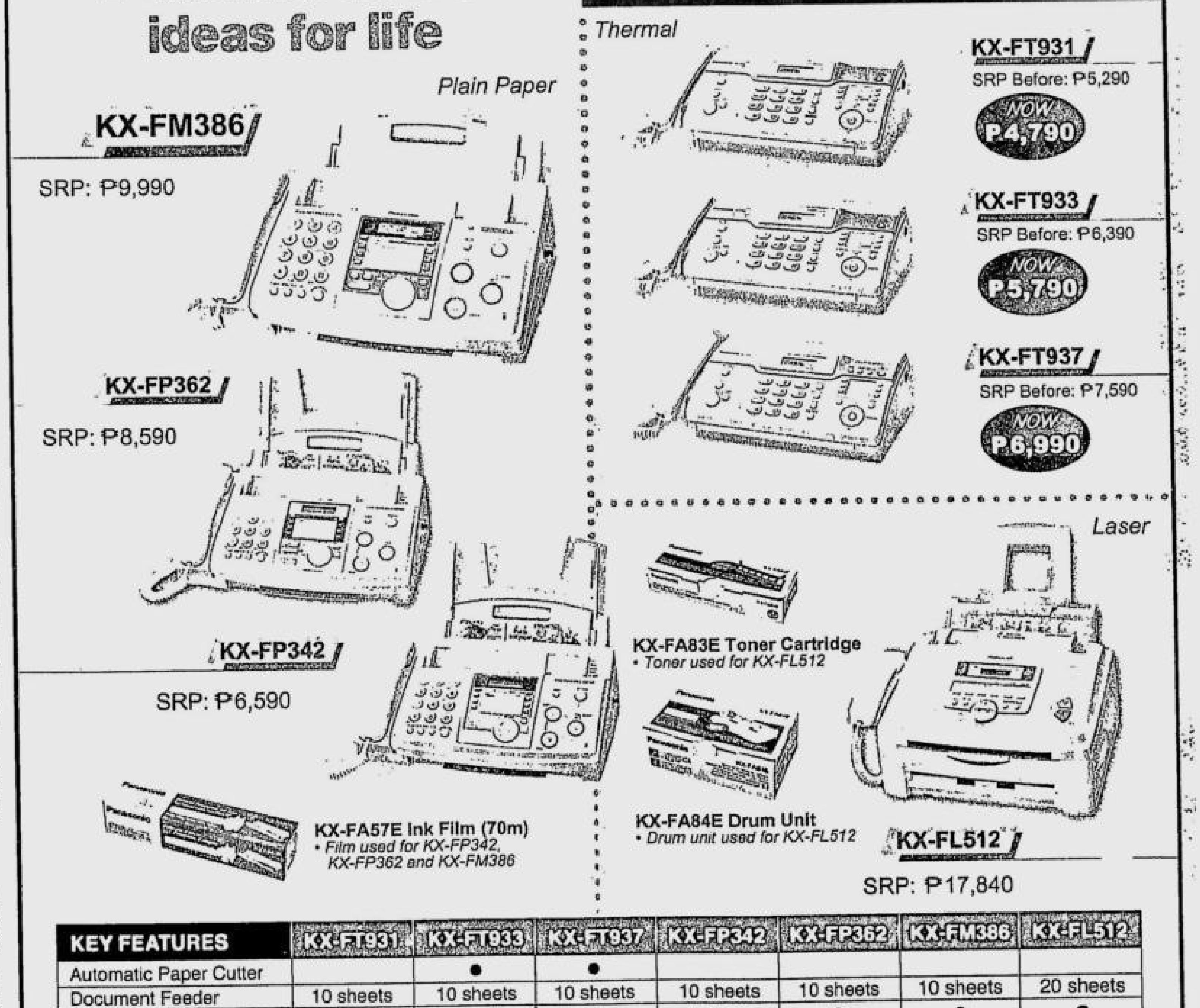

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SPORTS

Beermen take 2-0 lead

NOT EVEN the return of Erik Menk (in white) from the injured list could help save Barangay Ginebra from a 0-2 deficit. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Unconventional play helps SMB nip Ginebra

GAME WEDNESDAY (*Cuneta Astrodome*)
7 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Barangay Ginebra

By Musong R. Castillo

EVEN COACHES WIN GAMES—CONTRARY TO what the old adage says.

Chot Reyes ordered an unconventional play at the crunch that eventually lifted San Miguel Beer to a tightrope 104-101 decision of Barangay Ginebra last night and a 2-0 lead in their Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup title series.

Ahead by just two points, 101-99, with a full 24-second shot clock remaining, Reyes ordered a foul on Ginebra's Rafi Reavis which coach Reyes later said was a "calculated gamble" that proved decisive.

"I figured that we needed to get the ball back and have the last shot instead of them (Gin Kings) having it (the last shot)," Reyes explained. "Still, it was a game the players pulled out. It was just my job to guide them through it."

Reavis muffed both free throws and the Beermen took a three-point lead following a free throw split by William Wilson off Ronald Tubid's final foul with 18.7 seconds left.

Also playing a key role was Olsen Racela, who nailed a crucial triple at the height of a frenzied Ginebra comeback that tied the game, before feeding Danny Seigle with a brilliant entry pass for that 101-99 lead with 24 ticks to play.

"That's why he's the one who finishes the game for us," Reyes said, when asked why he opted for the 14-year veteran Racela even with rookie point guard LA Tenorio going great guns earlier.

"This is not over, not by a long shot," Reyes said when asked if he had the title in the bag. "The last time I checked, you need to win four games to win a (best-of-seven) series."

And Reyes broke into a wide grin when reminded that he was one of only three coaches ever to flub a 2-0 lead in a best-of-seven series.

"Please don't remind me," said Reyes, who, as coach of the Coca-Cola Tigers in the 2003 All-Filipino, blew a similar advantage and lost to Talk 'N Text.

The intensity was higher last night compared to San Miguel's 118-94 Game 1 win.

Seigle was roughed up on numerous occasions but still delivered 31 points for San Miguel, which is looking to win a PBA leading 18th title.

The scores:

SAN MIGUEL 104—Seigle 31, Hontiveros 22, Tugade 19, Racela 11, Tenorio 9, Adducul 5, Calaguio 3, Wilson 2, Pena 2, Espinas 0, Gonzales 0.

BARANGAY GINEBRA 101—Caguioa 32, Hatfield 20, Helterbrand 12, Reavis 10, Salvacion 7, Mamaril 6, Tubid 4, Menk 4, Abarrientos 4, Macapagal 2.

Quarters: 27-30, 56-52, 83-69, 104-101

Late Sports
More Sports stories on A29 to 32

Que ties for 11th spot

KUALA LUMPUR—THE PUTTS refused to fall this time but Angelo Que held on to finish with a two-over-par 74 Sunday and secure a fat paycheck by tying for 11th place in the $1.29 million Maybank Malaysian Open.

With a 3-under 285 total, the 2004 Vietnam Open champion, who started the day just two strokes off the lead, picked up $21,078 that boosted him from 49th position to 14th in the UBS Order of Merit.

Gerald Rosales opened his round with three successive birdies and signed for a one-under 71 and a 286 total that boosted last week's Philippine Open runner-up to a tie for 16th place worth $16,180.

And Frankie Minoza, the RP Open champion, completed a fruitful week for the Filipino campaigners by hanging on with a 74 for 287. He finished in a four-day jam for 23rd that was worth $13,609.

Sweden's Peter Hedblom ended an 11-year title drought with a final four-under 68 that lifted him to a one-stroke victory over Frenchman Jean-Francois Lucquin at 280.

I can't always prevent her from making mistakes. But I can certainly advise her about those which may have deadly consequences.

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Understand the risks for acquiring the HPV infection that can lead to cervical cancer and be in a better position to discuss the disease with your daughter.

Acknowledge the truth. In the Philippines, cervical cancer was the second leading cause of cancer death in women in 2004.[3] In 2005, 7,277 new cases and 3,807 deaths due to cervical cancer were estimated to have occurred (approximately 10 Filipino women deaths each day due to cervical cancer).[3]

Reach out to other mothers. You can help prevent the development of cervical cancer or better yet help protect other people's daughters by spreading this information.

Discuss prevention. Your Ob-Gynecologist or your daughter's Pediatrician can discuss ways to help prevent cervical cancer.

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[1] Uterine Cancer in: Harrison's Internal Medicine 2006, accessed online at http://www.accessmedicine.com
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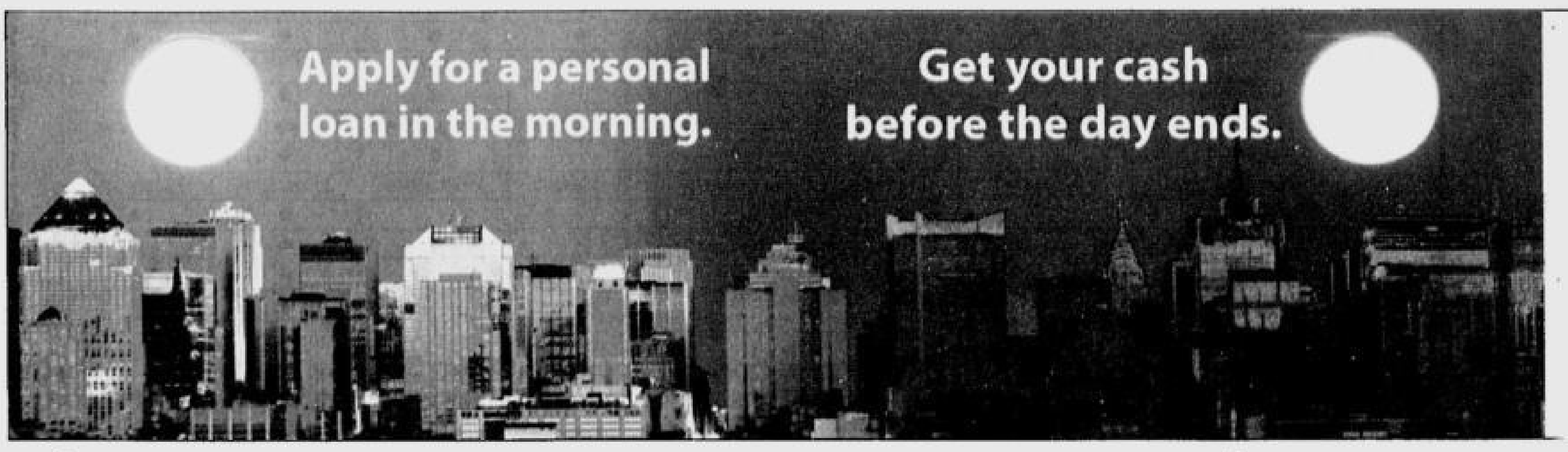
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2 cops shot dead in Rizal

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FOUR MEN RIDING ON TWO MOTORCYCLES shot to death two policemen who were conducting covert intelligence operations in a remote area in Taytay, Rizal yesterday afternoon.

The policemen, who were also on board a motorcycle, were wearing civilian clothes but the killers apparently knew their target, Rizal provincial police Senior Supt. Freddie Panen told the INQUIRER.

He said PO3 Romeo Malinao and PO2 Urbano Enero of the Regional Mobile Group were on patrol in Sitio Tapayan, Lupang Arenda at 2:40 p.m., conducting a "covert intelligence operation," when gunshots rang out.

Some witnesses told the police they saw at least four motorcycle-riding men open fire at the two policemen. The killers quickly fled after seeing the policemen fall to the ground, Panen added.

Follow-up operations were still ongoing as of press time to go after the suspects. An Agence France-Presse report quoted the police as saying they were not ruling out the possibility that the killings were carried out by Moro militants sympathetic to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

On Feb. 1, a team composed of members of the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the Maritime Group and the Philippine Marines raided a house in Lupang Arenda in search of suspected members of the MILF's Special Operations Group.

A man was killed while three others, including a suspected MILF member, were arrested during the police operation.

Marikina City opens new 2-km bike lane

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TO FURTHER ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO turn to bikes as their primary means of transportation, the Marikina City Bikeways Office yesterday opened a new 2.3-kilometer bike lane connecting Barangay Tumana to the Santolan station of the Light Railway Transit (LRT) Line 2.

Because of the new bike lane, which cost the city about P16 million, residents going outside the city can save on fare or gasoline, bikeways office head Lota Contreras told the INQUIRER.

"They (residents) can leave their homes on their bikes, park it near the station and just take the train," Contreras said.

The new bike lane is connected to old ones in the city, bringing the total length of bike lanes in Marikina to about 50 km.

She said construction of another 2-km bike lane was also ongoing on Rodriguez Street in Barangay Concepcion Uno, going to Sta. Elena.

The newest bike lane starts near the Tumana Bridge, which connects the city to nearby Quezon City. It is connected to the bike lane running on Marcos Highway, which ends at the LRT Santolan station.

METRO Citizen's call

0918-8985566

THERE'S an open manhole at Adriatico corner Alonzo Streets in Malate, Manila.
—AIDA QUIOHILAG, 55, Manila

I would like to report the excessive rates taxi drivers stationed on McKinley road

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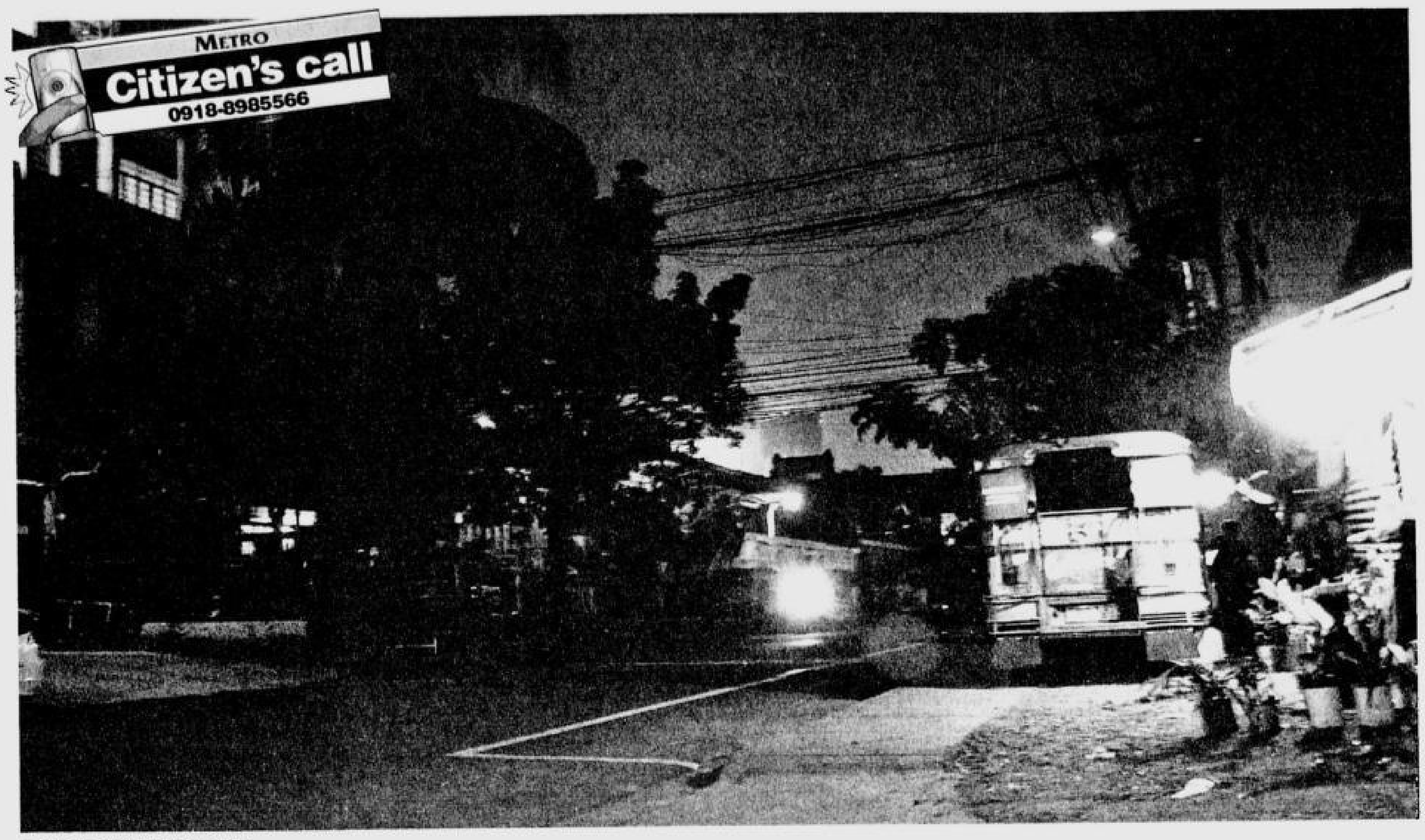

DARK AND DREARY
From Winston Casio, 29, of Bagong Pagasa, Quezon City: The dimly lit streets and side alleys of Dangay and Bansalangin in Project 7, Quezon City, have become cruising grounds for some homosexuals who have sex in parked public jeepneys and other dark places. SM City Annex near Edsa has likewise become a place for the flesh trade. I have reported the matter to barangay officials and City Hall but unless street lights are installed, I don't think the practice will stop. AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

From page A25

corner Edsa charge their passengers. They especially target students like me. They pack five students into their taxi cabs and charge them P30 each to go to Global City. That's P150 a ride. The normal metered rate is less than P70! I hope you can help students with limited budgets like me. Thank you.
—VANIA AGONCILLO, 18, Parañaque City

METRO
Citizen's call
0918-8985566

Calling the attention of Manila City Hall officials. Colorum vans and tricycles use the Light Rail Transit Abad Santos and R. Papa stations as terminals, causing traffic jams daily. Sad to say, Police Station 7 is just a few meters away.
—ANTONIO VILLANUEVA, 43, Caloocan City

Do you know that vendors are now occupying the exits at the Light Rail Transit Monumento station? Are we waiting for a tragedy to happen in case there is a stampede and the exits are blocked by these vendors and their stalls?
—REYNALDO LIM, 58, Caloocan City

Pakiayos naman ang nakabukas na manhole sa tapat ng Shakey's Fairview Center Mall. Marami nang nahulog dito. Pakiputol din ng nakausling bakal na malapit dito. Maraming gulong ng sasakyan ang nasisira nito. Ini-report ko na sa Metropolitan Manila Development Authority pero wala silang ginagawa tungkol sa problemang ito. Maraming salamat po (Please fix the open manhole in front of Shakey's Fairview Center Mall. A lot of people have fallen into it. Please cut the protruding bar nearby because it has destroyed the tires of many vehicles. I have reported these to the MMDA but they have yet to act on the problem. Thank you).
—MELCHOR CORDOVA, 48, North Fairview, Quezon City

Life comes up roses for this flower vendor

By Ross Harper-Alonso
Contributor

IT'S RUSH HOUR BUT EVEN THOUGH THE traffic light has turned green at the intersection of Pasay Road and Makati Avenue, the drivers of several cars slow down, their horns honking, as they drive past a grinning man standing on the curb with an armful of roses.

The weathered baseball cap on his head cannot hide twinkling eyes that turn to slits when he smiles. On this little spot in Makati City, Reynaldo de Guzman has peddled flowers every day, in fair or foul weather, for the past 27 years.

In the simplicity of his work, De Guzman has remained true to the promise he made to his wife Annabelle—that life with him would be a bed of roses.

De Guzman was only 19 when Annabelle became pregnant at 17 with their first child. But her parents did not think he was good enough for their daughter.

They hid her in Marillac Hills, a rehabilitation center for young women. For seven months, De Guzman searched everywhere for Annabelle and begged her family to allow him to see her.

On her ninth month, Annabelle managed to secretly send Rey a letter. In her heart, she knew he would come for her. Without thinking twice, Rey "sprung" her from the facility just like in the movies.

Five days after they eloped, Annabelle gave birth to Catherine on Aug. 29, 1982 with Rey at her side. They were married the following year in a mass wedding ceremony.

Making a point

Though both young and unable to complete their studies, the De Guzmans raised their children by themselves in a small house without running water and electricity for the first years. Rey didn't allow Annabelle to work because he believed it was his responsibility to take care of his family. He also wanted to prove to his in-laws that he could give their daughter a good and comfortable life even if he was not wealthy.

REYNALDO de Guzman shares a hearty laugh with Gemma Suzara, one of his regular customers. ERIK ARAZAS

"I came from a family of flower vendors and that's what I have become," Rey said. "My parents were separated and I couldn't continue going to school. Being the second of six children, I had no choice but to earn a living. I've known hard work all my life so I was confident I could provide for Annabelle."

"Rey never gave me a reason to worry or not to believe in him," Annabelle said as she reached for her husband's hand. "Of course, there were difficult times but I can't recall a time when he didn't make things better. He was always so determined to make me and the children happy."

Rey recalled, "I took on odd jobs when there were no flowers to sell. During the coups or the Baguio earthquake in 1990, I knocked on doors and asked people for any kind of job. I cleaned cars, mowed lawns and landscaped gardens to get my family through those lean days."

"I must have made a good impression on my clients because they had me delivering flowers and doing floral arrangements for their friends' parties and business receptions in no time. Eventually, they recommended me for weddings," he added.

Faith in God

Rey has come a long way from being a young man charming motorists and pedestrians into buying his roses on Pasong Tamo (now Chino Roces). He and Anabelle believe they breezed through trials because of their unwavering faith in the Lord and their devotion to each other.

"I have great respect for Rey and he has the same for me," said Anabelle who is now a pastor at the Spirit Reigns Through Jesus Christ Church in Taguig City near their home. "He has really been a good provider and a supportive partner."

The couple and their children now live in a modest house equipped with basic appliances and surrounded by plants. Rey, however, still weaves his way through traffic with his blooms when the light turns red. However, these days, it's not with the sole purpose of making a sale. He also wants to just catch up with people who have become his friends.

"Good afternoon, sir!" he greets a Makati executive in a chauffeur-driven SUV. He also gives the man a firm handshake. "How many roses do you want today?" Rey asked. The gentleman shakes his head but presses a crisp P100 bill into the humble entrepreneur's hand. "Have a good evening," he said quietly before driving off to Rey's profuse thanks.

Rey then rushes to the next car where an elderly lady who lives in a condominium is calling. She wants a dozen flowers for her altar. "How are you, Ma'am?" he asked her. "Still beautiful like yesterday!" the elegant lady replied in halting Tagalog and the two share a good laugh.

Endearing personality

"He has an endearing personality and a strong positive energy that just draws people to him naturally," explained Gemma Suzara, a resident of San Lorenzo Village. "I've known Rey since I returned to Manila from the United States in 1986 and it's always so pleasant to see him when I'm on my way to the office or going home. We have short chats while waiting for the light to turn green and I think it's admirable how he has managed to have this professional but friendly demeanor about him despite his lack of formal education."

But Rey and Annabelle made sure their children were educated. Catherine graduated cum laude and now works at a regional trial court. She's all set to take the bar exam this year. Arlene and Ely are teachers while Rey Jr. is a hotel and restaurant management graduate working at a popular restaurant. The younger girls, Sheena, is in college while Perlita goes to a high school near their home.

With their 25th wedding anniversary just around the corner, the De Guzmans are very excited to renew their vows. "We were married with dozens of other couples in the church but now, it'll just be us," Rey said with a smile. "We've saved up enough to have a nice ceremony and thanksgiving Mass."

₱1 hike in movie tickets mulled

By DJ Yap

PAY AN ADDITIONAL PESO FOR A MOVIE ticket and help your favorite celebrities receive their star on the local version of the Hollywood "Walk of Fame."

A Quezon City councilor has filed an ordinance requiring all cinema owners and operators in the city to impose an additional fee on movie patrons to support the "Walk of Fame" Philippines Foundation.

Under the proposed measure, theatergoers will have to pay an additional P1 when buying movie tickets at Quezon City cinemas for the entire month of March.

The proceeds will go to the operation of "Walk of Fame," a pet project of television personality German Moreno, said the proponent, Councilor Julian Coseteng.

He said Quezon City, formerly known as the "City of Stars," should recognize the valuable contributions of artists in the entertainment industry.

The Walk of Fame is located at the Central Plaza of Eastwood City in Libis, one of the most popular night spots in the city.

Like Hollywood's own Walk of Fame, the local version honors film and television personalities who are immortalized on golden stars lining the plaza.

DID YOU KNOW

IN JANUARY 1971, hundreds of students formed a barricade on University Avenue on the University of the Philippines Diliman campus to protest an oil price increase of three centavos per liter. On Feb. 1, Prof. Inocente Campos, said to be a supporter of then President Ferdinand Marcos, insisted on entering the campus. When the students refused, he fired at them and hit Pastor Mesina Jr., a freshman who was a member of the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan. He died three days later.

Police also tried to break up the barricade by arresting students, turning the rally into a mass action against the violation of academic freedom and police brutality. The protest, which would last until Feb. 9, eventually became known as the Diliman Commune. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

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STATEMENT

Of

SENATORS JOKER P. ARROYO AND RALPH G. RECTO

10 February 2007

We ran for the Senate and won on the Arroyo administration slate. Nothing that has happened since gives us reason not to do the same in our reelection bid.

We have opposed the President on many major issues, before the Supreme Court no less. And we won.

We fought the Venable contract which involved American money to change the Constitution. We fought the People's Initiative to do the same. We fought the emasculation of Congress by EO 464 and put the PCGG back under the law when it tried to rise above it. We fought Proclamation 1017, which curtailed freedom of assembly and freedom of the press.

We have reported out and condemned anomalous deals and contracts involving PIATCO, the TAX CREDIT scandal, NAPOCOR and MASINLOC biddings, the BOLANTE fertilizer scam and others. We never allowed our committees to be used for harassment or any other purpose than to find the truth.

Yes, the administration has committed grave blunders. But through all these, the President never tried to dissuade us from opposing her.

Why then should we not run again in the administration Senate slate? It has never tried to undermine our independence or bind our conscience or stand in the way of what we believed had to be said and done. It has respected if it did not always enjoy our roles as senator.

In a crisis, one must take a stand.

The opposition want to impeach the President. That is their constitutional prerogative. But one has yet to hear the opposition denounce attempts by military adventurers to topple the government and set up another one outside the Constitution. They have steadfastly refused to recognize the constitutional succession of the Vice-President.

In short, the opposition want to write their own ticket and take back power on the broken back of the Constitution.

That is unacceptable on our part and self-contradictory on theirs. They fought, commendably, the foul attempt to change the Constitution but they will not uphold the Constitution.

The economy is improving. Inflation and unemployment are dropping. True, the rich are getting richer and these improvements have yet to be felt by the vast majority of the poor. But no question, little by little, the people are getting better off.

The opposition have yet to explain what part they intend to play if they achieve their ambition in this midterm election. No one can deny that the country is moving forward. The political choice in the coming election is to trip up the country or help it along.

On balance, until the opposition can offer something more than the impeachment of the President, the country is better off letting this administration complete the work it is doing while keeping a close watch on anything else it may attempt.

ADVT

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Putin says US out to dominate world

MUNICH, GERMANY—RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin has attacked the United States as a reckless power that has made the world more dangerous by pursuing policies that have led to war, ruin and insecurity.

Putin stunned an audience that included US Defense Secretary Robert Gates and senior US and European officials with the speech Saturday at a high-level security conference in Munich.

The White House said it was "surprised and disappointed" by Putin's accusations and Gates was expected to respond on Sunday, in his first major speech since taking office.

In comments reminiscent of his campaign opposing the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, Putin said the United States had disastrously "overstepped" its borders.

"The United States has overstepped its borders in all spheres … and has imposed itself on other states," Putin told delegates at the annual Munich Conference on Security Policy.

Putin said a "unipolar" world "means in practice one thing: one center of power, one center of force, one center of decision-making, a world of one master, one sovereign." Such a situation "is extremely dangerous. No one feels secure because no one can hide behind international law," Putin said.

He added that US dominance was "ruinous." "Local and regional wars didn't get fewer. The number of people who died didn't get less, but increased … We see no kind of restraint." Putin also rejected criticism that under his watch, Russia has back-tracked on democracy, saying that the United States was "permanently teaching Russia about democracy. But those who teach us, for some reason don't really want to study it themselves."

The speech added to tensions between the Kremlin and the United States, which have grown after a period of relative rapprochement in the 1990s.

Boosted by his country's oil wealth, the Russian leader has tried to restore Moscow's international clout, making common cause with fellow critics of the United States, notably Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, and maintaining a traditional friendship with Iran. *AFP*

PUTIN AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Ground-breaking study on diabetes identifies genes

PARIS—An international team of scientists on Sunday reported it had identified several of the most important genes linked to Type 2 diabetes, a disease that is spreading at epidemic rates. The discovery should open the way to a test to identify people with an inherited risk of diabetes, thus enabling them to make lifestyle choices that could sidestep the disease, they said. The researchers, based in Britain, France and Canada, said they had identified four areas on the genome where mutations in the genetic code, called single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), exposed an individual to a higher risk. As much as 70 percent of the genetic drivers for Type 2 diabetes—a disease that also is linked to a bad diet—could be attributed to these variants, they believe. *AFP*

New setback stalls N. Korea nuke talks

BEIJING—Negotiations over North Korea's nuclear weapons program stalled on Saturday as disagreements arose about the size and timing of the aid package that would be provided to North Korea in exchange for shutting down the country's nuclear weapons facilities. "The differences on the issue still remain large," said Qin Gang, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry. The impasse occurred amid rising expectations for an agreement in Beijing, where the diplomatic talks were under way, and in Washington, where Bush administration officials had predicted a major announcement this weekend. Instead, negotiators from North Korea, China, the United States, South Korea and Japan will meet again Sunday for a fourth day of talks. Christopher R. Hill, the chief US envoy, would not discuss any specifics about the dispute but said negotiations had largely boiled down to one issue. "Frankly, I had hoped we could get it done on Saturday," Hill said. "But I think it's going to take another day or two." *New York Times News Service*

Obama officially announces US presidential campaign

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS—Senator Barack Obama officially announced his bid for president, urging an end to the Iraq war and portraying himself as a fresh face capable of leading a new generation. He is the youngest contender among his fellow Democrats and would be the first black US president if elected. "Let us transform this nation," he told thousands shivering in the cold at the campaign's kickoff Saturday. Obama, 45, is relatively new to national politics, but is already considered one of the top challengers in his party to front-runner Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton in the 2008 election. *AP*

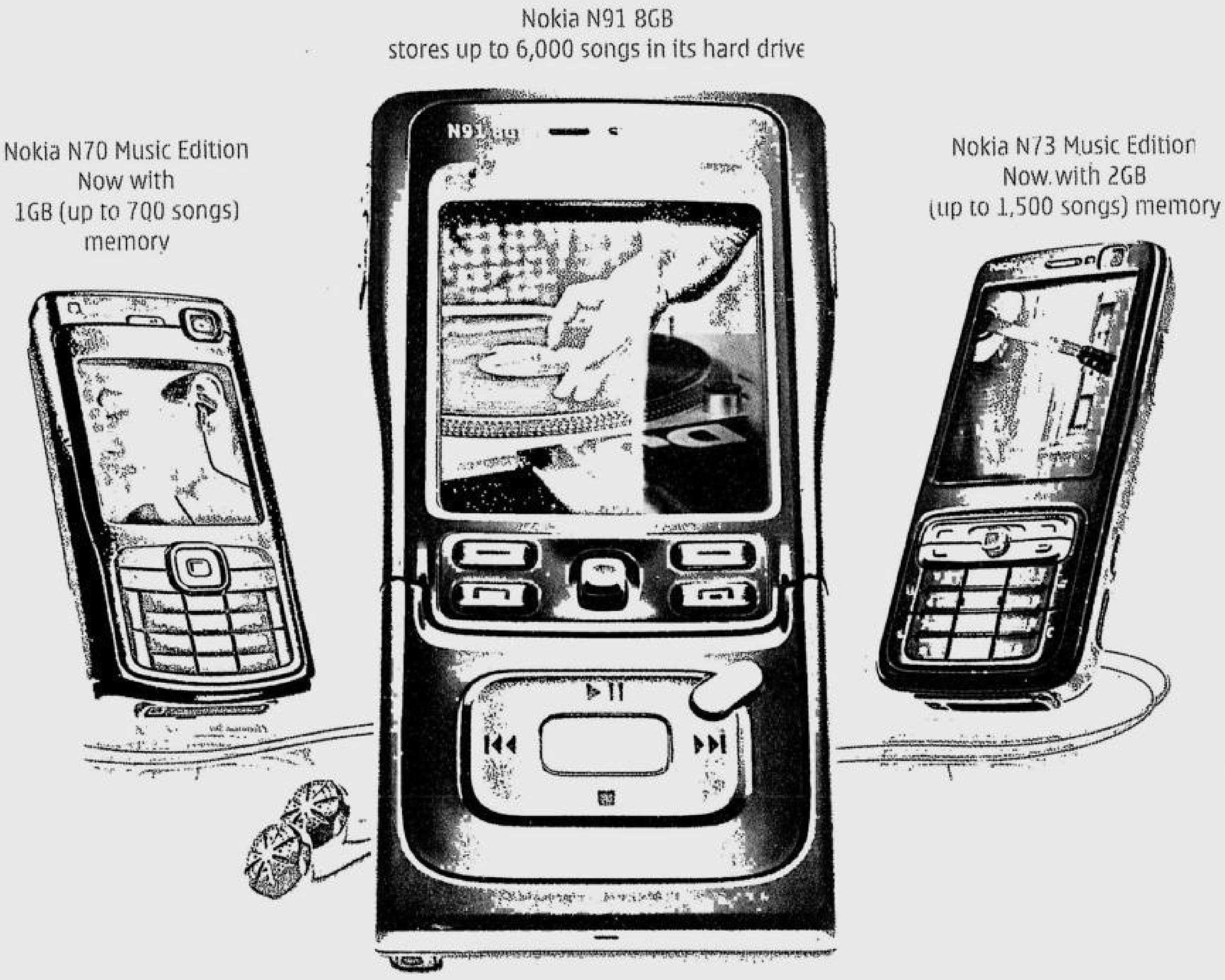
So too does Giuliani

GIULIANI AP

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.—Rudolph W. Giuliani made it clear on Saturday that he was running for president and half-joked that he had just announced. But in keeping with his recent comments, he chose his words coyly and seemed amused by the news media's obsession with his every nudge toward a formal statement. Referring to the presidential race as he concluded a speech to a convention of the California Republican Party, Giuliani said: "You get to decide who that leader will be. I wish you'd decide on me." Then he walked away from the podium as surprised delegates asked themselves whether they had just heard a declaration. Speaking to reporters a short time later, he said, "Yes, I am committed" to the race. *New York Times News Service*

Suicide car bomber kills 12 near Baghdad

BAGHDAD—A suicide bomber driving a truck packed with explosives killed at least 12 people on Sunday when he attacked a police station north of Baghdad, police said. Police at the scene said the vehicle blew up after ramming the main gate of the police station in the mainly Sunni town of Dour near Tikrit, 175 km north of Baghdad. They said the blast severely damaged the building. The dead included policemen and civilians. The death toll could rise as bodies were still being pulled from the rubble, they said. At least eight people were also wounded. *Reuters*



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WHAT'S INSIDE

Mosley claims WBC interim crown /A31

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Pistons hum smoothly, halt Raptors' win run /A31

Mamiit does it all as RP prevails

Filipinos eliminate Pakistanis in Asia-Oceania tie, zero in on Group I

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WITH HIS SMALL, BRISK strides, Cecil Mamiit yesterday took the Philippines a step closer to the heady heights of Davis Cup Group I action.

Mamiit was again a bundle of energy, firing a variety of killer shots to overwhelm Pakistani No. 1 Aqeel Khan, 6-1, 6-3, 6-2, as the country clinched the Asia Oceania Group II tie with a 4-1 triumph at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Except for Khan's occasional forays at the net, the Pakistani could not find an answer to the Fil-American's solid all-around play and showmanship that endeared him to the packed Sunday crowd.

With the victory, the Philippines marched to the second round against New Zealand.

With the tie secured after Mamiit's win, PJ Tierro took the place of Eric Taino and made quick work of Yasir Khan, 6-3, 6-0, in the inconsequential last singles.

"It gave me goose bumps just to see you people," said the 30-year-old Mamiit. "It was a pleasure seeing you smile, dance and come out here. I hope we finally get to the World Group in the next two years."

The New Zealanders ousted Pacific Oceania after taking an insurmountable 3-0 lead and will face the Filipinos next in April. The winner then collides with the survivor of the other Group II ties pitting Hong Kong against Indonesia and Kuwait against Iran.

The Group II topnotcher then moves up to Group I, which the country last crashed in 1995. The Group I winner joins the World Group qualifying, which the Philippines reached in 1991 with a team bannered by Felix Barrientos.

"We were able to follow our game plan and we are all very happy to win the tie," said RP nonplaying captain Martin Misa after his boys hurdled the Pakistanis, who were recently relegated from Group I.

"I'd like to thank the whole team, especially Eric (Taino) who played very hard yesterday," said Mamiit, who has yet to lose a Davis Cup match since helping the Philippines climb from the depths of Group III last year.

Mamiit won the opening singles over Pakistani No. 2 Jalil Khan, 6-1, 6-0, 6-1, Friday morning then teamed up the next day with fellow Fil-Am Taino to secure the doubles match over Aqeel Khan and Asim Shafiq and give the host nation a 2-1 lead.

Aqeel had beaten Taino in the second singles Friday, forcing Misa to turn to Mamiit and Taino for the doubles in favor of the tandem of Johnny Arcilla and Tierro.

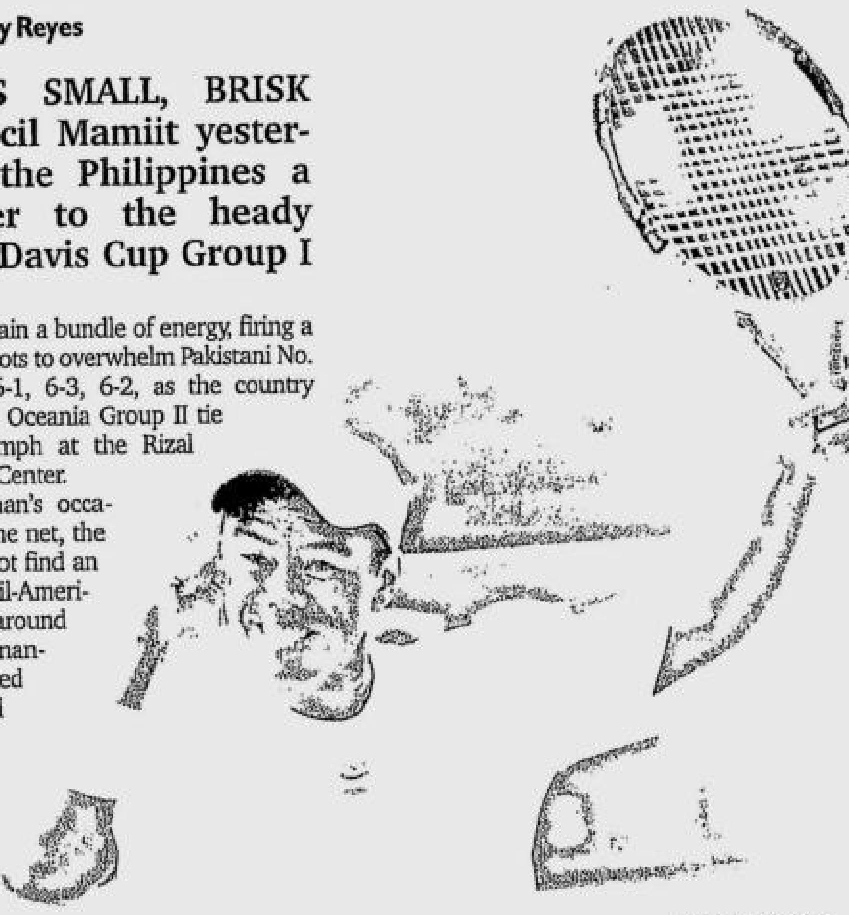
"I'm very fortunate to be a Filipino," said Mamiit, who was born to Filipino parents from Batangas and Quezon and was raised in Los Angeles. "I'm brown and proud (of it)."

Cecil then called his father, Cesar, from the stands to join him in the on-court interview. "As you can see, I got my height from him," joked the younger Mamiit, who at 5-foot-7, still towered over his dad.

"Thank you for supporting my son, thank you for supporting tennis. I never thought there will come a time like this," said Cesar, who joined his son all the way from Los Angeles to watch the Davis Cup tie.

Mamiit, who picked up two bronze medals (singles and doubles with Taino) in the last Asian Games, capped his two-hour domination of Aqeel by breaking him with a forehand winner in the eighth game of the third set.

The Southeast Asian Games singles champion then dropped his racket, fell on his back and stayed on the hot court surface for several seconds before standing up to shake Aqeel's hand.



CECIL Mamiit acknowledges the gallery after sweeping Pakistani No. 1 Aqeel Khan and clinching the tie for the RP Cuppers.

RYAN LIM

DAVIS CUP
(2nd round Group II tie; April)
—RP vs New Zealand
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RP d. Pakistan, 4-1
NZ d. Pacific Oceania, 3-0

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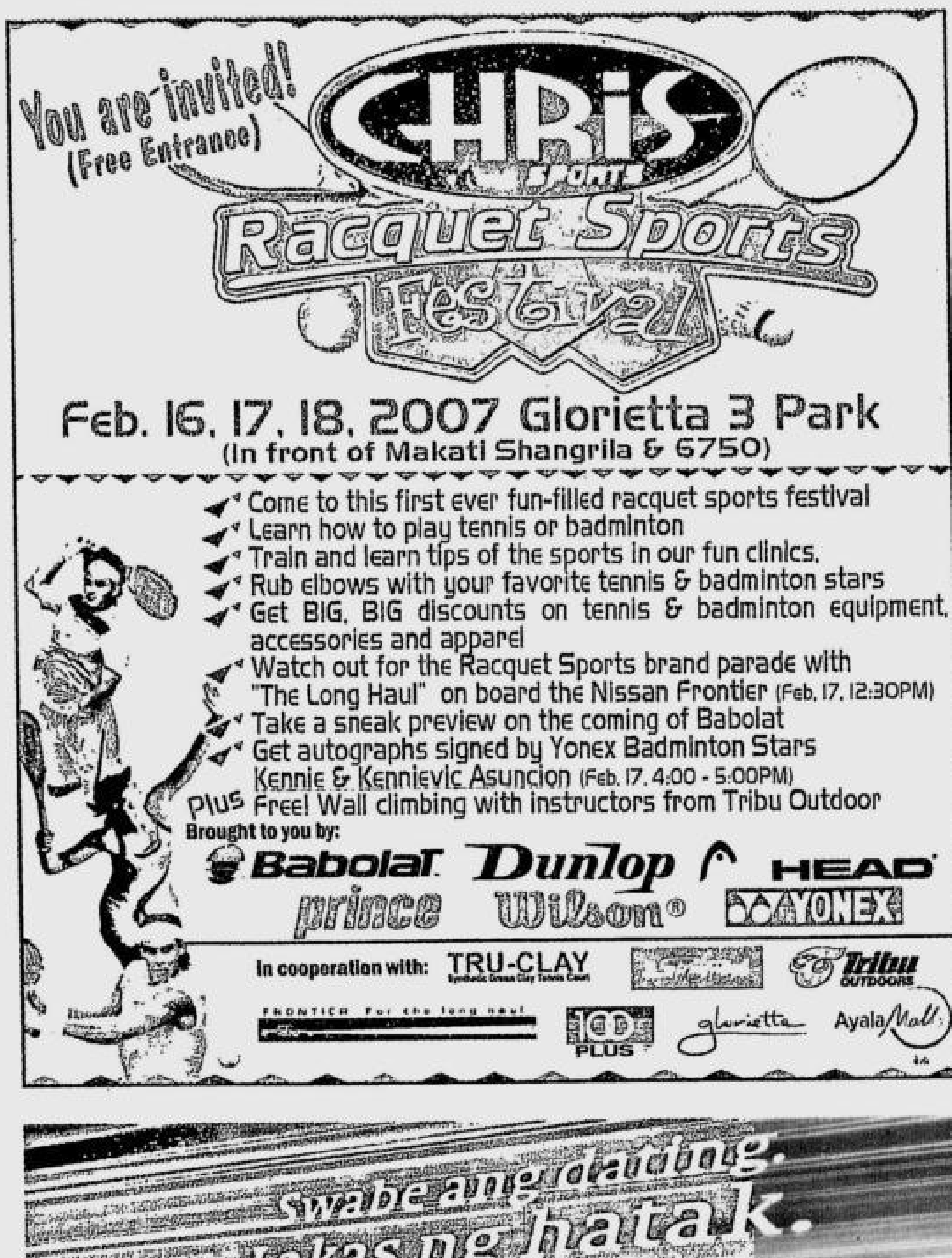

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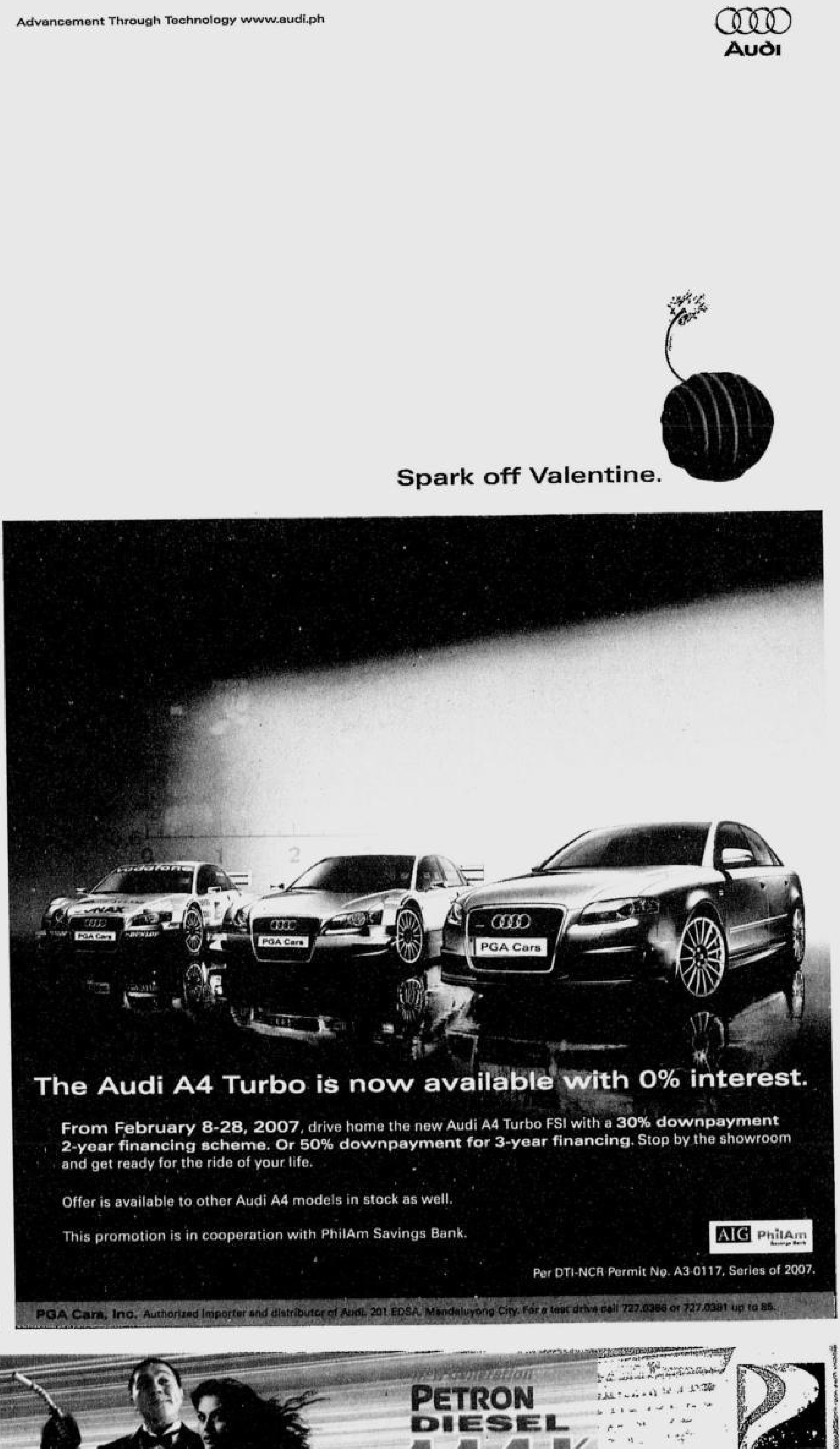

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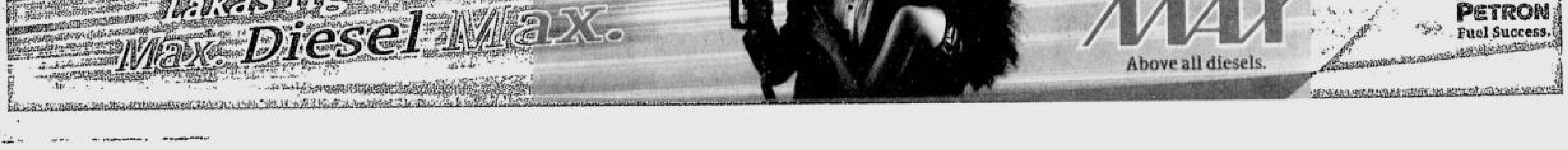

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Ex-champs take center stage again

By Jasmine W. Payo

THERE WERE LITTLE EXPECTATIONS FROM TWO FORMER champion teams at the start of the PBL Silver Cup, mainly because they were both fielding heavily-retooled rosters.

But Hapee-PCU and Harbour Centre, each with a title in the last three years, still made it to the last dance.

Despite bagging the title in the 2006 Unity Cup, Harbour Centre lost most of its swagger with the departure of team stars LA Tenorio and Joseph Yeo to the pro league.

Hapee-PCU had also been struggling to find the right mix since winning the crown in the 2004 Platinum Cup with Peter Jun Simon, Rich Alvarez and Larry Fonacier—now all professionals.

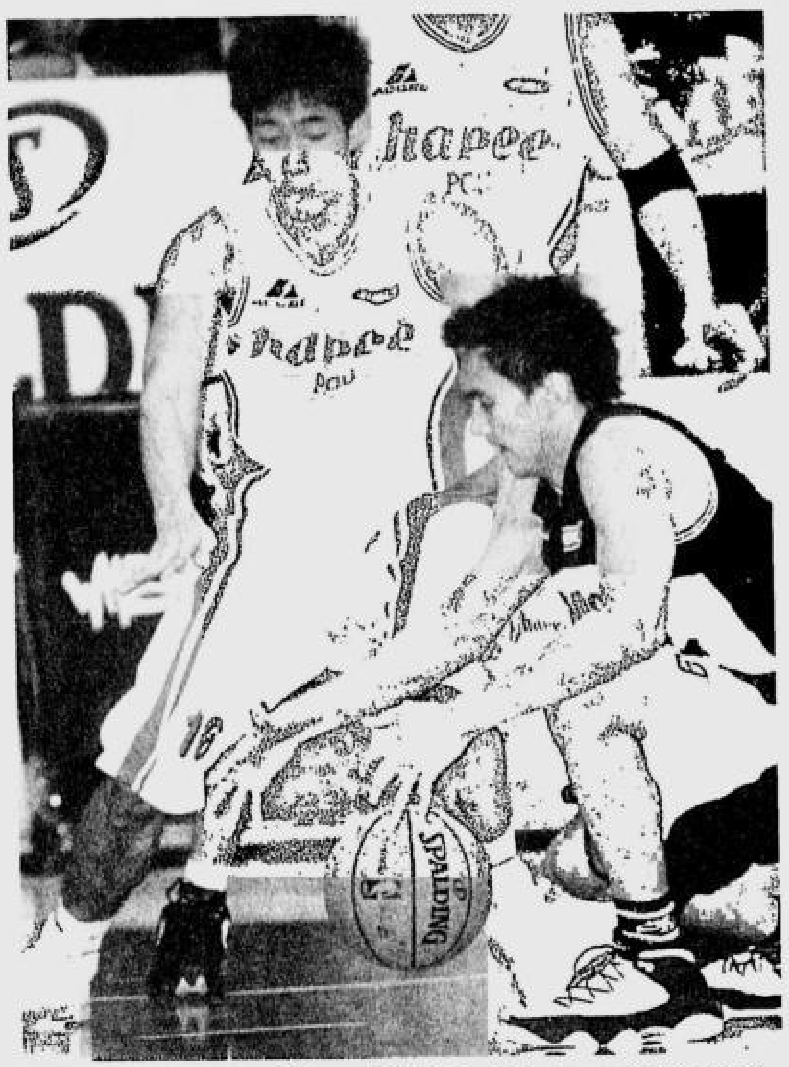
The Teeth Masters, though, finally found the perfect combination by tapping veteran coach Jun Noel and three amateur stars from different colleges—Jason Castro of Philippine Christian University, Mark Borboran of University of the East and Larry Rodriguez of Philippine Maritime Institute.

"Making it to the Finals is just a bonus for us," said Noel. "We were already happy when we made it to the top four."

Hapee-PCU surprisingly emerged as the top team in the classification phase and claimed the first outright semifinal slot.

Still on a roll, the Teeth Masters again clinched the first championship berth after edging Mail and More, 3-1, in the semifinals.

GAMES TUESDAY
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Mail and More
(Battle for 3rd)
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Harbour Centre
(Game 1-Finals)



THE HEADS-UP play of Hapee-PCU'S Mark Borboran (16) is one of the main reasons why the Teeth Master are in the title series. RYAN LIM

Harbour Centre, though, took some time before settling with late acquisition JC Intal, the high-leaping Ateneo hotshot.

Going through a longer journey, the Port Masters first disposed Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala in the quarterfinals, then rallied from a 1-2 deficit before ousting Toyota Otis, 3-2, in the semifinals.

"I'm giving the players all the credit," said coach Jorge Gallent, who will try to steer Harbour Centre to its second straight crown starting tomorrow in Game 1 of the best-of-five title series.

RP Seaba stint up at meeting today

By June Navarro

WITH THE LIFTING OF THE FIBA suspension a foregone conclusion, PBA commissioner Noli Eala said he would propose to activate the committee tasked with forming the national squad in today's meeting among the country's top basketball leaders.

BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny V. Pangilinan will preside over the meeting that will include PBA chair Ricky Vargas, SMC basketball operations chief Robert Non of national team supporter San Miguel Corp., national coach Chot Reyes and Eala.

The group will tackle the programs that should be set in motion as the BAP-SBP goes through the process of officially getting reinstated in the international basketball federation (Fiba).

Eala is expected to present three options each for the preparation and training of the national team, among others, during the meeting at the PLDT office.

"In my opinion, I see no problem in fielding an amateur team (in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association tournament)," said Eala, a member of the BAP-SBP board of trustees.

"We're not far behind in the region even if we took a long break in international tournaments."

To be hosted by Kuala Lumpur and scheduled in May, the Seaba is the qualifying tournament for the Fiba Asia championship in Saitama, Japan, in July where the top two countries will advance outright to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Under the BAP-SBP charter, the professional sector (PBA) will be tasked with forming and handling teams for elite tournaments such as the Fiba-Asia championships and the Olympics.

Lesser tournaments like the Seaba and the Southeast Asian Games, will be handled by a five-man committee composed of three BAP-SBP board representatives from its collegiate sector and two from the commercial sector.

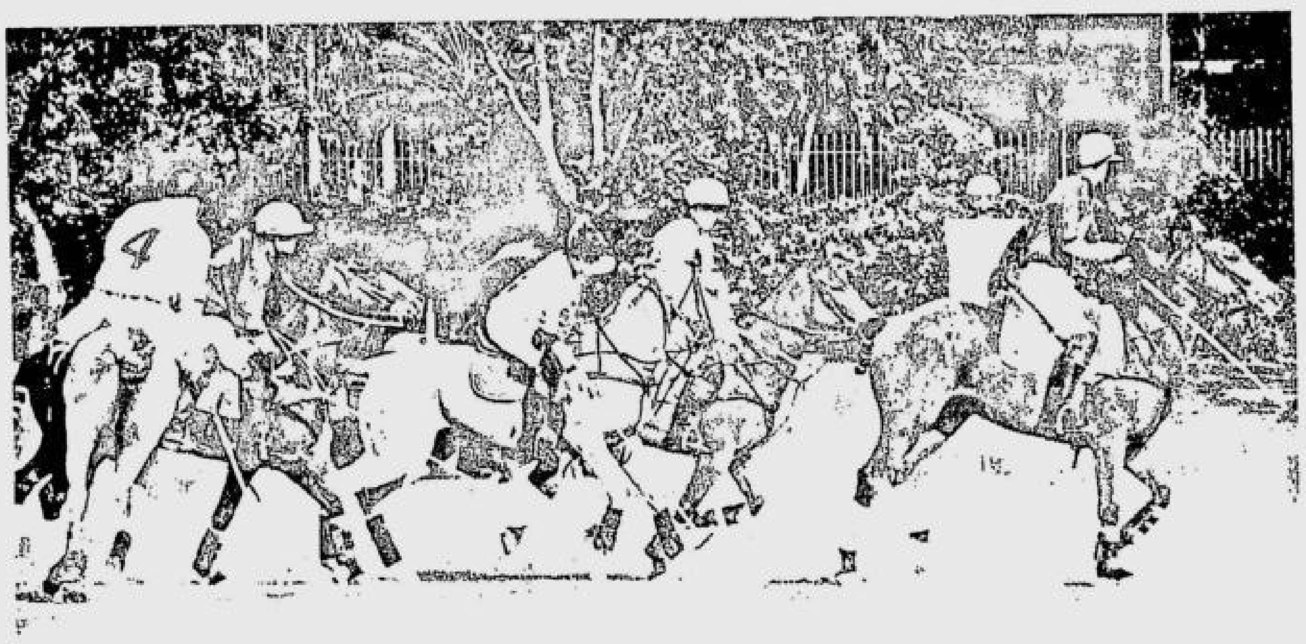
Though not in the agenda, another hot topic that may be discussed is the appointment of the executive director, who will handle the day-to-day operation of the organization.

BAP-SBP membership committee chair Ely Capacio was urged to come up with a short list of two to three candidates and recommend them for approval by the board.

Sources in the pro ranks said Chito Salud, son of former PBA commissioner Rudy Salud, and Junjun Capistrano of Ateneo are two of the strongest candidates for the still vacant position.

"There's an immediate need for an executive director," said Eala. "It's imperative for him to start working right away."

Battling Blues outplay Whites; Aguirre steals show



THE Blues' Iñigo Zobel (2) applies the pressure on the Whites' Mark Austin (2) in yesterday's high-goal match. RODEL ROTONI

By Jasmine W. Payo

SCORING KEY GOALS IN ALL CHUKKERS, THE Blues bested the Whites, 10-6, yesterday in the featured high-goal match of the Enrique Zobel Memorial Polo Cup at the the Enrique Zobel Polo Field in Forbes Park, Makati.

Veterans Iñigo Zobel and Mark Field orchestrated the offensive with nifty horsemanship as the Blues, which also counted on Jake Zobel and Paulito Pierres' heady play, dominated the afternoon duel.

The White team of Bobby Aguirre, Mark Austin, Jose Donoso and Anthony Garcia kept within striking distance at 7-5 until the Blues regained their second wind and put the match away.

In the low-goal match, young Gusi Aguirre blasted home two quick goals in the third chukker to lead the Blues to a 7-4 victory over the Whites.

Aguirre scored on two offside shots in a one-minute span to shatter a 4-4 deadlock heading into the final chukker of the game that started with the Whites enjoying a one-goal edge due to difference in handicaps.

"We were a bit more cohesive and a little more experienced than the players on the other side," said Blues captain Jose Constantino.

"Gusi has been competing in Australia and he's been riding for about four to five years."

Aguirre also scored in the first chukker, sandwiched by a 30-yard penalty converted by Constantino and a nearside shot by Alfie Araneta, that gave the Blues an early 3-1 lead.

But the Whites soon hit their strides with Adrian Garcia scoring an offside goal midway in the second chukker and Santi Elizalde connecting from a 30-yard penalty, 3-3.

Another Constantino goal in the final minute gave the Blues a 4-3 advantage at the break but Garcia forged that 4-4 tie with a goal just seconds into the third chukker.

Garcia led the Whites with two goals, while Elizalde chipped in one. Miguel Camara and Santi Juban completed the Whites' lineup.

Pacquiao need not hunt for a big foe

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

EVERYBODY, EXCEPT ONE MAN, DOESN'T want Manny Pacquiao to run for political office.

That single objector, as you must know by now, is none other than Mr. Pacquiao himself.

There seems no stopping the man now.

Last heard of, the Filipino super hero was just waiting to decide whether to run as mayor of GenSan City or congressman of South Cotabato.

No question about it: Pacquiao didn't, doesn't and won't listen to his provincemates.

He is ready and raring to go against their wishes.

That said, let this count as a green light, a go-signal, for Pacquiao to jump in.

It's your turn to wade and swim in the ever-growing quagmire of Philippine politics.

Do it, buddy.

Even sports heroes are entitled to their own folly.

***

You see, when it was first hinted he would be entering politics, Pacquiao's very own mother, Dionisia, went live on television to try and dissuade his famous son from entering politics.

Mother and hero next talked and, based on the subsequent compromise, the conflict has been resolved in the Pacquiao kitchen.

What Manny wants, Manny gets.

***

Yes, Pacquiao must've felt, quite honestly, that this opportunity may never come his way again.

He's at his hottest.

In fact, political pundits swear he would win at the polls without throwing a single serious punch.

Plainly put, he doesn't have to do it dirty—as is the usual practice hereabouts—and smear his would-be opponent.

All Pacman has got to do is be his usual self.

***

Strike while the iron is hot, brod.

What is he for as the greatest living Filipino sports star if he can't use his popularity to win a political title?

Of course, there are questions that need to be asked.

Will the political title fit?

Is there anything bigger than his myth that could assuage this mysterious urge?

What's Pacquiao really up to?

***

Now, please listen to several answers to that last question.

"He's not a robber—*hindi naman siya magnanakaw*—why is he so hot about running for political office?"

That one was actually sent by Louie, a stall helper in the meat section of the Mandaluyong City market last week.

From Benjie Angeles, agriculture activist: "Received many message from GenSan. *Dati* fans *sila ni* Pacquiao, *ngayon sinusuka na siya*. He has become a swell-head, *lumaki ang ulo*. GenSan people feel insulted. *Walang tinapos*, he's unschooled, *gustong mag*-mayor."

The international audience has also clearly frowned on Pacquiao's political plot, as reported in various websites within the week.

Meanwhile, the search for Pacquiao's foe has ended.

At least, Bob Arum after toying with Pacquiao's schedule, first setting it in Macau against an over-priced Korean, before bringing the fight to Texas, sounded firm in his last announcement.

***

Hold it. We can never be sure—based on how Arum has been making final choices before making a turnaround.

Not very surprising, though. Arum, in working with Pacquiao, has obviously picked a trick or two from the Filipino hero, who is known to promise one thing and do the exact opposite the next day.

Pacquiao, indeed, needs a terrible foe to sustain and legitimize his relevance.

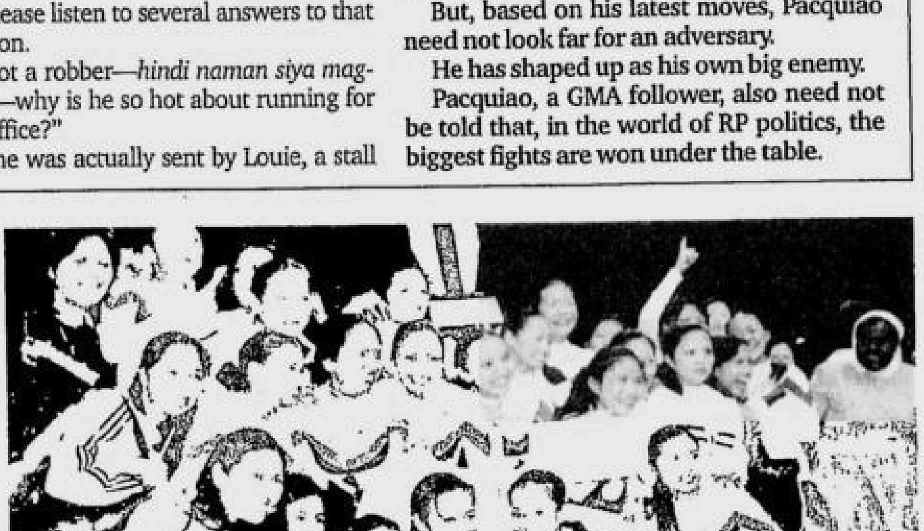
But, based on his latest moves, Pacquiao need not look far for an adversary.

He has shaped up as his own big enemy.

Pacquiao, a GMA follower, also need not be told that, in the world of RP politics, the biggest fights are won under the table.

St. Scho champs again

DISPLAYING CONFIDENCE AND TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE honed through its long reign as champion, St. Scholastica's College-Manila captured yet another crown at the close of the Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (WNCAA) Cheerleading Competition at the Cuneta Astrodome over the weekend. The Scions made it six titles in a row in the final activity of the 37th season of the WNCAA before a wildly cheering capacity crowd. SSC-Manila staved off the gritty challenge from Miriam College, Emilio Aguinaldo College, Centro Escolar University, St. Francis of Assisi College, College of St. Benilde and Rizal Technological University which completed the seven-team final round. Miriam College, another crowd favorite, went on to place second while dark-horse EAC finished third. St. Scholastica won the top cash prize of P30,000, Miriam took home P20,000 and EAC received P10,000. All winners received a trophy each.



VICTORIOUS: Members and officials of the St. Scholastica squad celebrate their victory.

SPORTSWATCH

'Bakbakan sa Tagaytay' Part 4 Tuesday

BIGTIME BOXING RETURNS TO TAGAYTAY CITY ON TUESDAY TO CO-INcide with the annual "Pista ng Pag-ibig" project of Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino. Fernando Montilla, former RP welterweight champion, fights Arnel Tinampay for the interim PBF junior welterweight title scheduled over 10 rounds. A championship trophy will be awarded by Tolentino to the winner of the main event, held in coordination with promoter Jun Sarreal. The veteran Montilla, who totes a record of 33 wins, 19 losses and three draws, is managed by Lito Mondejar of L&M gym while Tinampay (10-5-1) is handled by Robert Montemayor of Pasig City. In other bouts, Jose Ocampo battles Diosdado Perez (127 lbs.), Jeno Quilitar takes on Dennis Bulsio (108), Lobert Bayo clashes with Erwin Omnis (110), and Jun Plasidad fights Dennis Cawas (116).

Peñalosa buckles down to work in US

FORMER WORLD BOXING COUNCIL SUPERFLYWEIGHT CHAMPION GERRY Peñalosa arrived in Los Angeles, California, on Thursday and immediately buckled down to work at the Wild Card gym in Hollywood to prepare for his title challenge against WBO superbantam king Daniel Ponce de Leon on March 17 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Philboxing.com's Ed De la Vega said Peñalosa is about "70 percent in shape" after logging training rounds at his home gym in Parañaque and in Manila. Set to follow him in the United States are his brother-trainer Jonathan and boxer Michael Farenas, who is hoping to be given a slot in the card.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

RP Cuppers to grace PSA Forum

THE VICTORIOUS PHILIPPINE DAVIS CUP TEAM MAKES A RETURN APpearance in tomorrow's session of the PSA Forum at the main function room of Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. Cecil Mamiit, Johny Arcilla and PJ Tierro, along with non-playing captain Martin Misa and Philippine Tennis Association president Boy Mendoza will discuss the team's prospect of reaching the Group 1 stage of the tournament following its 4-1 victory over Pakistan yesterday. Asian Formula Three chair Ed Peña and managing director Mark Goddard will also join the program sponsored by Pagcor, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Manila Sports Council chief Ali Atienza, together with Table Tennis Association of the Philippines officials Victor Valbuena and Alvin Carranza.

SJC 'National Rambulan' draws big field

THE P10.5-MILLION SJC NATIONAL RAMBULAN 8-COCK DERBY, UNDISputedly the biggest cockfighting event this summer in terms of prizes and number of entries, kicks off on March 1, 3 and 6 at San Juan Coliseum. "Since this event will be staged in 23 different cockpits nationwide, we are expecting a minimum of 800 entries," said promoters Rodolfo Pineda and Butch Nuñez. The elimination and semifinal rounds will be held in different cockpits and sports complexes, while the championship round will take place at the SJC in April. Entry fee is P11,000. The inter-cockpit format, with big guaranteed prizes at stake, is popular in the Visayas and Mindanao, according to Nuñez.

80 matches up in Makati Valentine derby

THE ANNUAL "RLB VALENTINE 5-COCK DERBY" TAKES CENTER STAGE AT the Makati Coliseum starting at 5 p.m. today with 80 matches on tap and B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador as sponsors. Hosts Richard Bates and retired colonel Necy Katigbak of Batangas have invited prominent cockfighters from different groups like Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines, Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association, Batangas Breeders Club, Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association and Cavite cockers. The favorites include 2007 World Slasher Cup champion Gengen Arayata, former senator Ramon Revilla, Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza, Danding Cojuangco, Gov. Ito Ynares, Bobby Doromal, Emil Chua, Butchoy Olano, Fred Katigbak, Efren Canlas and Richard Kelly.

Pistons hum smoothly, halt Raptors' win run

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—RASHEED WALLACE MADE UP for a fourth-quarter technical foul by scoring six points of his season-high 28 points late in the game, helping the Detroit Pistons beat the Toronto Raptors 98-92 on Saturday night.

Richard Hamilton added 21 points and eight assists for the Pistons, who won their sixth straight.

TJ Ford had 17 points and 11 assists for the Raptors, whose five-game winning streak was stopped. Chris Bosh added with 14 points and 11 rebounds for Toronto, which has lost eight in a row at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

Detroit, which led 76-73 after three periods, continued to hold the lead for most of the fourth before getting frustrated by the officiating, culminating in Wallace's technical foul. Anthony Parker's free throw pulled the Raptors within 85-84, and Andrea Bargnani followed with a 3-pointer to put Toronto ahead.

Wallace answered with a three-point play that put Detroit back in front, and his 3-pointer with 2:45 remaining finished the Pistons' 10-point run.

In other NBA games, it was New Jersey 93, Orlando 78; New Orleans 114, Memphis 99; Denver 109, Milwaukee 102; Houston 104, Charlotte 83; Utah 104, New York 102, OT; Sacramento 114, Seattle 93.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Vince Carter scored 32 points and reserve Marcus Williams added 12 clutch points to lead New Jersey.

Jason Kidd had 10 points and nine rebounds as the Nets extended their winning streak to three.

Dwight Howard scored 25 points on 11-of-15 from the field along with 12 rebounds for Orlando, which lost for the 12th time in 16 games.

Williams came in late in the third quarter to spell Kidd and immediately took charge by scoring the last six points for the Nets in the period as New Jersey took a 66-63 lead.

Starting the fourth quarter, Williams orchestrated a 15-8 run that sealed it. Williams scored four points in the surge and dished out three assists.

In Oklahoma City, Chris Paul had 23 points and 11 assists, and David West added 22 points to help New Orleans win its third straight.

After back-to-back overtime wins, the Hornets put this one away earlier—using a 17-3 push shortly after halftime to take control.

Tyson Chandler had 15 points and 16 rebounds for his seventh double-double in the last eight games, while Desmond Mason added 16 points.

Pau Gasol had 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Grizzlies, who fell to 0-15 in the second game of back-to-back sets and 0-13 against Southwest Division foes. Memphis, which beat Minnesota in overtime Friday, hasn't won consecutive games this season.

In Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur forced overtime on a layup with 12 seconds left in regulation, and Derek Fisher scored with 3 seconds left in the extra period to lift Utah past New York.

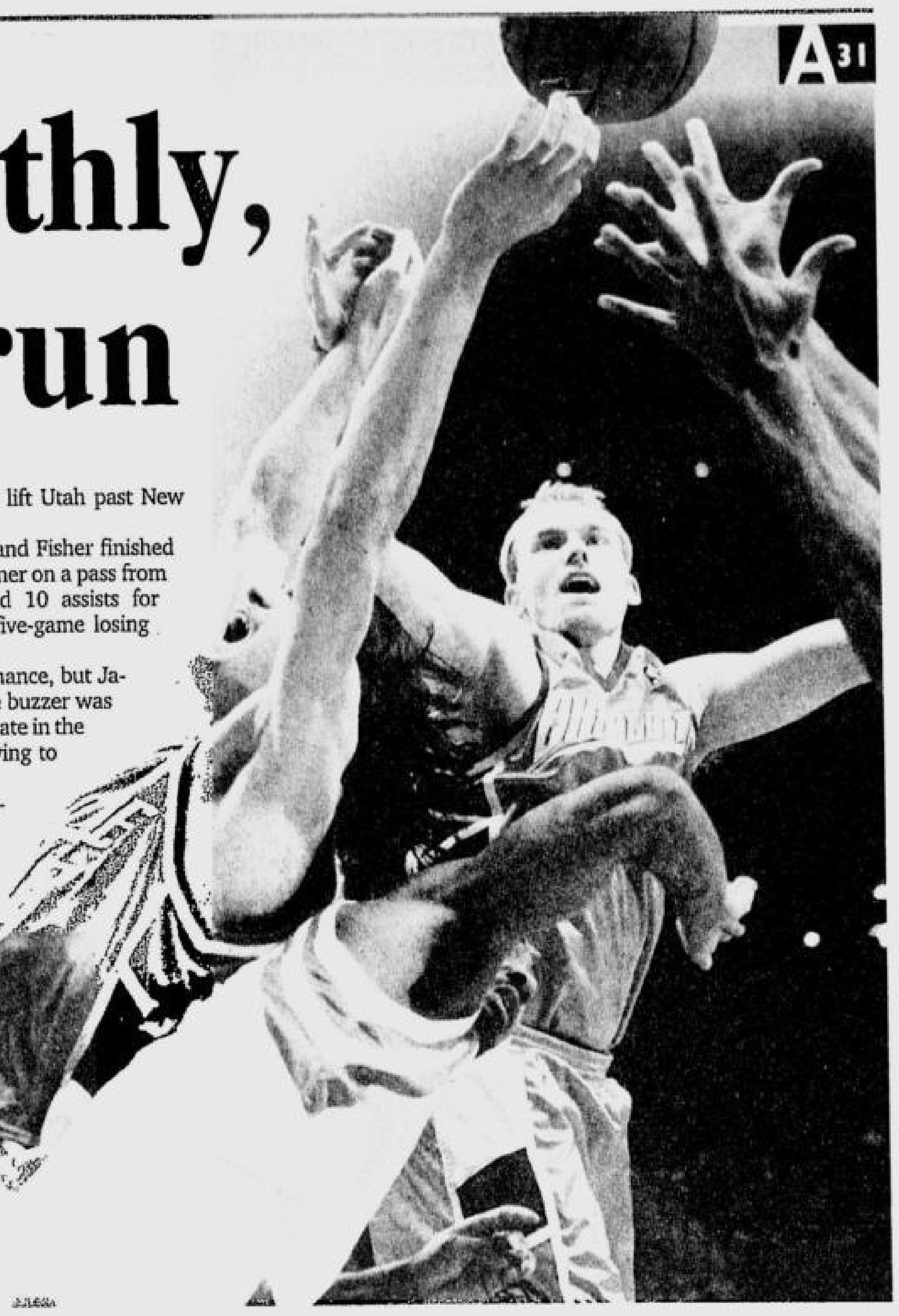
Okur scored 29 points and Fisher finished with 14, including the winner on a pass from Deron Williams, who had 10 assists for Utah. The Jazz ended a five-game losing streak against the Knicks.

New York had a final chance, but Jamal Crawford's shot at the buzzer was off. The Jazz trailed by 10 late in the fourth quarter before rallying to win their fourth in a row.

In Houston, Tracy McGrady and Juwan Howard each scored 16 points and Houston rebounded from a blowout at Dallas a day before to beat Charlotte.

Dikembe Mutombo, who has been great in place of the injured Yao Ming, added 14 points and 14 rebounds for Houston, and Rafer Alston had 14 points.

Raymond Felton led Charlotte with 16 points, and Emeka Okafor had 15 points and 12 rebounds. *AP*



CHARLOTTE Bobcats' Adam Morrison (left) and Jake Voskuhl, (right), fight for possession of the ball against a seemingly lost Luther Head of the Houston Rockets. AP

NBA TODAY (*Basketball TV*)
9 a.m.—Chicago vs. Phoenix (replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)

Mosley claims WBC interim crown

SUGAR
JADIN

SHANE Mosley (left) jars Luis Collazo with a solid left that left no doubt as to who is the dominant fighter. REUTERS

LAS VEGAS—SHANE MOSLEY WANTS TO fight until he's 40. The way he looked Saturday night against Luis Collazo, he might consider extending his career even longer.

Fighting a tough southpaw 10 years his junior, Mosley was both faster and stronger as he punched his way to a unanimous 12-round decision in a welterweight fight that was entertaining from the opening bell.

The 35-year-old knocked Collazo down in the 11th round and used his superior speed against a fighter who didn't have nearly his experience but was game and still punching with everything he had when the fight ended.

"I knew I was faster than him and could hit him with the quick jabs," Mosley said. "By the third round I knew I would be able to hit him with different shots."

Mosley knocked Collazo down with a short right hand late in the 11th round, but Collazo got up at the count of four and the bell rang before action continued. It was the only knockdown of the fight, though both fighters landed some big shots.

Two judges had Mosley winning 118-109, while the third had it 119-108. The Associated Press had Mosley winning 117-110.

Collazo said he hurt his left hand in training and again in the third round, and wasn't able to use it effectively.

"I wish I could have been more effective," he said. "But that was the best I could do."

Mosley, coming off of two wins over Fernando Vargas that seemed to reenergize his career, was a 3-1 favorite against the heavily tattooed Collazo, who held a piece of the welterweight title before losing it last May to Ricky Hatton.

Mosley moved down in weight to 147 pounds (67 kilograms) after spending much of the last five years fighting at 154 pounds (70 kilograms). He predicted he would be quicker and he was, jumping inside Collazo's long reach to beat him to the punch with regularity.

"It feels good to be a welterweight again," Mosley said.

The win could make Mosley a welterweight champion once again because the WBC billed it as an eliminator to the title held by Floyd Mayweather Jr. When Mayweather vacates the title to fight Oscar De La Hoya on May 5, it will revert to Mosley. *AP*

Beckham makes big Real return

MADRID—DAVID BECKHAM MADE A dramatic goal-scoring return for Real Madrid on Saturday as the Spanish giants beat Real Sociedad 2-1 to breathe new life into their title campaign.

Ironically, the former England skipper's performance may also have helped save Fabio Capello's job.

The Italian coach had vowed Beckham would never play for him again after the ex-Manchester United man signed a $250-million deal to move to Los Angeles Galaxy in the United States at the end of the season.

BECKHAM REUTERS

But with Madrid in danger of slipping off the championship pace, and the Spanish media predicting the ax for Capello if they lost on Saturday, the 31-year-old Beckham made a fairytale return.

He found the net in the 36th minute with a trademark, right-foot, 25-meter free kick which sneaked around the side of the two-man Sociedad wall, beat Chilean goalkeeper Claudio Bravo and pulled Real level at 1-1.

"I am happy that Beckham scored," said Capello.

"All the team is happy for him. I have spoken with him twice in the course of the last two weeks but what we said will remain just between us."

On Friday, when Capello announced that Beckham had been recalled, the Italian had been fulsome in his praise of the player.

"He is a great professional and we are counting on him until the end of the season," said Capello.

Mikel Aranburu had given second-from bottom Sociedad a seventh-minute lead when he headed in from close range after goalkeeper Iker Casillas had made a terrible hash of a cross from the right by Xabi Prieto.

Madrid made sure of the three points when Ruud van Nistelrooy scored the winner three minutes into the second half. *AFP*

Mickelson, Sutherland share lead

PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA—PHIL Mickelson shot a 2-under 70 on Saturday in the most miserable conditions of the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, giving him a share of the lead with Kevin Sutherland.

Sutherland got into the final group for the second time in three weeks with a birdie on his final hole at Poppy Hills for a 67 and joined Mickelson atop the leaderboard at 14-under 202.

John Mallinger, a 27-year-old rookie, had a 68 at Poppy and was one shot behind.

Sutherland opened with a 72 at Pebble Beach on Thursday. Jim Furyk had to take on rain that fell sideways in 30 kph (20 mph) gusts at Pebble Beach on Saturday, and it was costly. He hit a fairway metal for his second shot on the par-4 10th over the cliffs and took double bogey, and wound up with a 76.

'Crosby' weather

More "Crosby" weather was in the forecast for Sunday, and that was OK with Mickelson.

"The key if the weather gets bad is to drive the ball well," he said after his round on Spyglass Hill. "You have to put the ball in place because from the rough or the bunkers, you're just fighting for par the whole time. I'm actually really excited about my chances. I've been driving it better than I think I ever have, and I'm excited about putting it to the test here."

Aiding his chances are the limited number of contenders.

The 42-year-old Sutherland plays his best golf in his native California, but his only US PGA Tour victory came five years ago down the coast at La Costa in the Accenture Match Play Championship.

He was one shot out of the lead going into the last round at the Buick Invitational, but closed with a 74 and tied for 14th. *AP*

MICKELSON: Weather's fine AP

Davis Cup ties go to reverse singles

LONDON—THE FIVE TEAMS WITH 2-0 leads after the first day of the Davis Cup all failed to secure advancement to the quarterfinals Saturday.

Defending champion Russia, France, Belgium, Sweden and Argentina all could have earned insurmountable 3-0 leads with wins in the doubles, but all lost. The United States, Germany and Spain, however, each moved closer to the next round of the World Group with wins.

The eight best-of-five series will be decided in Sunday's reverse singles matches. The last time a team won a Davis Cup match from a two-point deficit was in 1998, when Sweden beat Slovakia.

The Americans closed in on the last eight after Bob and Mike Bryan beat Lukas Dlouhy and Pavel Vizner of Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, to give their team a 2-1 lead.

Playing on clay and in front of a partisan crowd of 7,000 at the Cez Arena in Ostrava, the top-ranked Bryan brothers finished off their Czech opponents with lethal efficiency once a set was on the line.

"At the 5-4 games, we definitely upped our level a little bit and we got a little lucky," Bob Bryan said.

Germany got its win from Alexander Waske and Michael Kohlmann. The pair beat Mario Ancic and Ivan Ljubicic, 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 (5), to give the Germans a 2-1 lead over Croatia in Krefeld, Germany.

Feliciano Lopez and Fernando Verdasco beat Yves Allegro and Marco Chiudinelli, 7-6 (5), 6-7 (3), 6-7 (2), 6-1, 12-10, in a match that lasted nearly five hours to give Spain a 2-1 lead over Switzerland in Geneva.

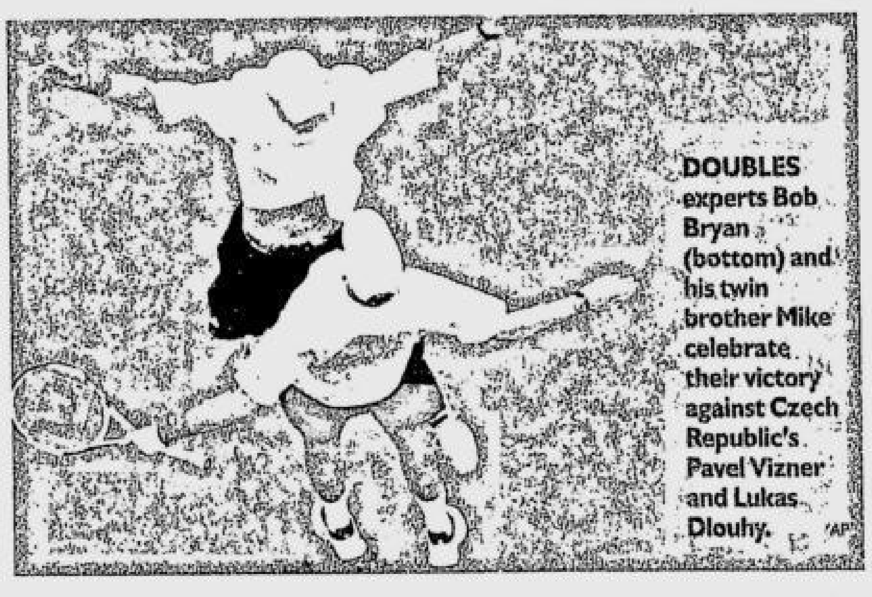
Nicolas Massu and Fernando Gonzalez kept Chile alive by beating Marat Safin and Igor Andreev, 7-6 (3), 6-3, 6-4, of Russia in La Serena.

The French fans in Clermont-Ferrand tried to rally their team to victory by signing the national anthem late in the match, but Florin Mergea and Horia Tecau of Romania still managed to beat Arnaud Clement and Michael Llodra, 3-6, 7-5, 7-5, 6-7 (3), 11-9, to reduce their deficit to 2-1.

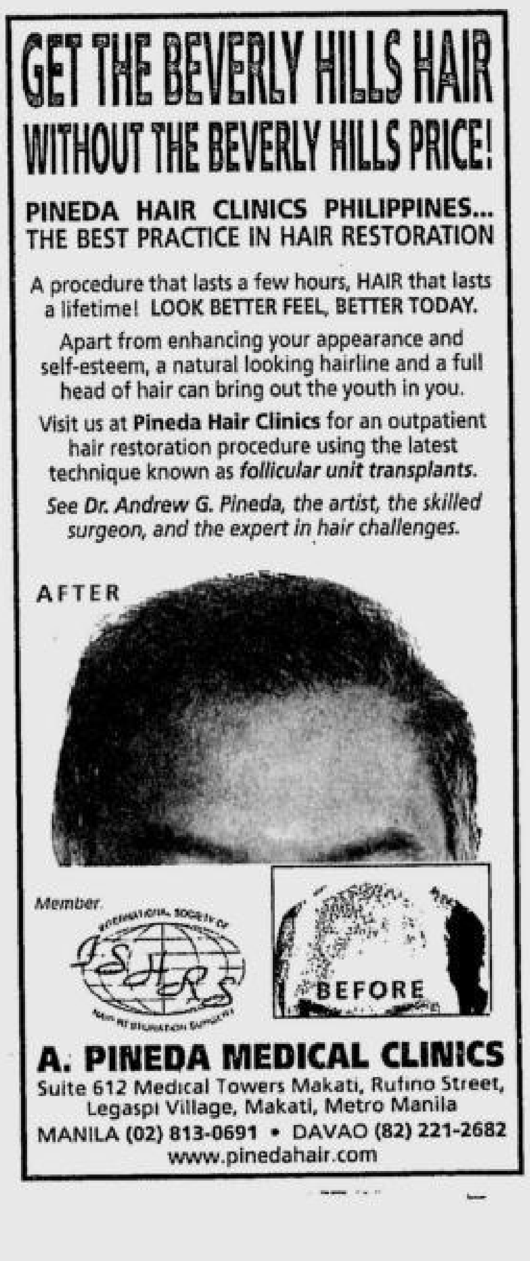
Juergen Melzer and Julian Knowle beat Jose Acasuso and Sebastian Prieto, 6-3, 6-7 (2), 6-1, 7-5, to keep Austria alive against Argentina in Linz.

Lleyton Hewitt and Paul Hanley gave Australia its first point against Belgium, beating Kristof Vliegen and Olivier Rochus, 6-2, 6-4, 6-2, in Liege.

Max Mirnyi and Vladimir Voltchkov gave Belarus its point, beating Simon Aspelin and Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden, 7-5, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, in Minsk. *AP*



DOUBLES experts Bob Bryan (bottom) and his twin brother Mike celebrate their victory against Czech Republic's Pavel Vizner and Lukas Dlouhy. AP



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SPORTS

EDUARDO Buenavista and Mercedita Manipol (front row) show their trophies. Also in the frame are (from left) Baguio City Mayor Peter Rey Bautista, Adidas' Goody Custodio and local race organizer Leo Arnaiz.

BAGUIO KING & QUEEN OF ROAD

B'vista, Manipol take 4

EDUARDO BUENAVISTA AND MERCEDITA Manipol claimed their fourth straight Adidas King of the Road crowns in contrasting fashion yesterday at the Burnham Park in Baguio City.

While Manipol, the country's undisputed queen of the 10K race, was virtually unchallenged, Buenavista needed a lung-busting burst in the final 200 meters to beat Jerry Lindawan.

"He's strong, I only caught up with him at the finish line," Buenavista, a two-time Asian King of the Road champion, said in Filipino. "I would have lost if I didn't have the speed."

The 28-year-old Buenavista had a mediocre season in marathon last year and he plans to reclaim the King of the Road throne this year.

Buenavista clocked 32 minutes and 41 seconds yesterday, four seconds ahead of Lindawan.

Manipol, a one-time Asian Queen of the Road, timed 36 minutes and 38 seconds. Her nearest pursuer, Flordeliza Carreon, clocked 37:41.

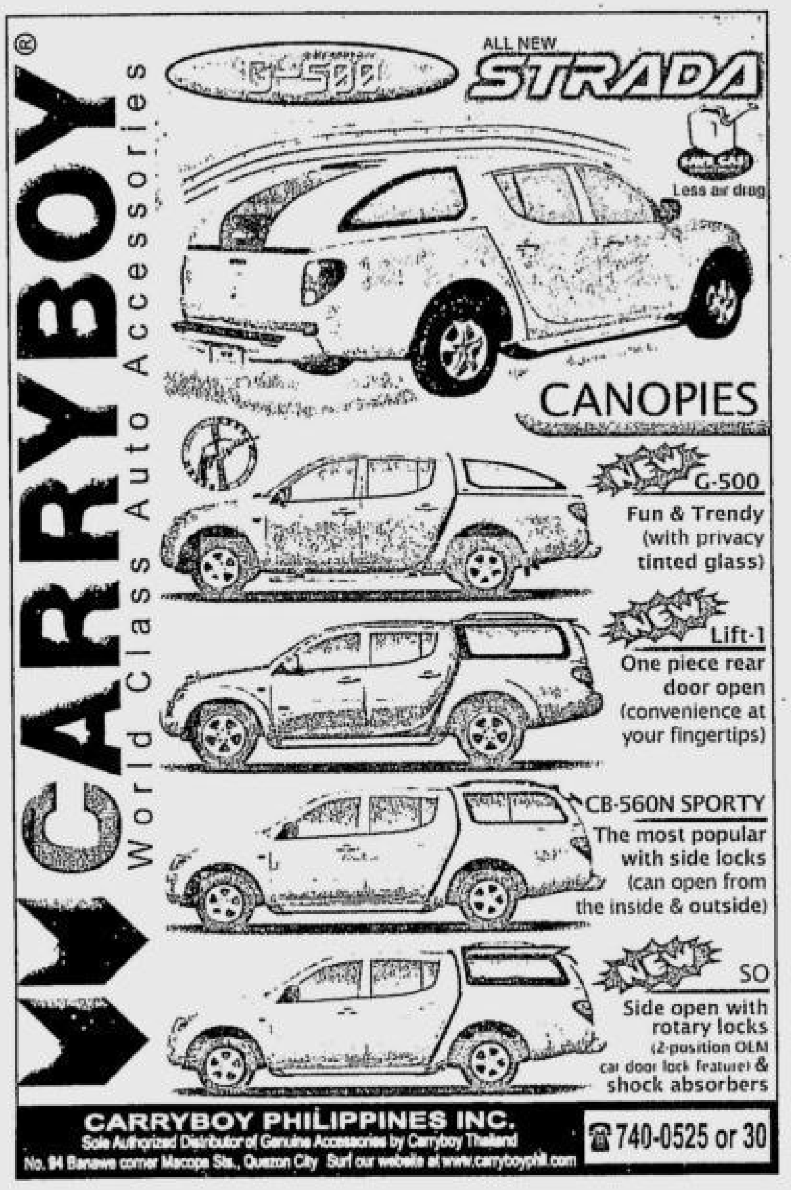
Buenavista and Manipol each won P10,000 cash and Adidas gift certificates worth P10,000.

Lindawan and Carreon settled for the 20-29 age-group titles. Joining them were Ceasar Castaneto Jr. and Flordeliza Donos (13-19); Marson Tarcelo and Olive Cortez (30-39); Marylou Andrada and Edilberto Lumibas (40-49); and Jeffrey Tabuzo and Rezi Jimenez (50-above).

The winners in the 3K side event were Paul Pasigon II and Jeziel Bengtay (6-9); Enrique dela Torre and Norilyn Reyes (10-13); and Roman Salbino and Catherine Aviles (14-above).

Baguio City Mayor Peter Rey Bautista, who joined the 3K run, fired the starting gun that flagged off the 10K participants.

Meanwhile, Cool City topped the team event and won gift certificates worth P15,000. Second and third were the Philippine Military Academy and Christian Legacy Academy, respectively.



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Milo Palawan 21K: Tale of two victories

PUERTO PRINCESA—RUBEN SAMUYA showed superior running skills yesterday in ruling the second leg of the 31st National Milo Marathon elimination run that started and ended at Mendoza Plaza here.

The 34-year-old farmer's son dominated the 21-kilometer race in 1 hour, 14 minutes and 42 seconds to pocket the top prize of P10,000.

Samuya, a baker who became a full-time runner, said the absence of a legitimate challenger prevented him from posting a better time.

He crossed the finish 400 meters ahead of Adonis Lubaton, who clocked 1:16.05, followed by Marco Laipan, who did 1:17.02.

Lubaton, a native of Romblon, won P6,000 while Laipan, who outsprinted Billy Garga to third place, received P4,000.

Unlike Samuya, Enate Sayrol, a former member of the national track and field team, needed her vast experience to beat a stubborn Bernardette Mag-Aso and win the distaff race in 1:41.14.

The 33-year-old Sayrol, a national runner for five years until 1997, won P10,000, while the 19-year-old Mag-Aso received P6,000. Maricris Laipan, 19, checked in third in 2:36.38 and won P4,000.

Samuya, Lubaton and Laipan along with the three top finishers in the women's race advanced to the Milo national finals where they will match speed against the qualifiers from the other regions, led by reigning champion Julius Sermona.

Mayor Edward Hagedorn, assisted by Milo Sports executive Pat Goc-Ong, fired the starting gun to send off a total of 5,000 runners.

The annual foot race goes to Malolos, Bulacan, on Feb. 18 for the third leg organized by former NCAA trackster John Baloloy.

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ENATE Sayrol hits the tape as she tops the ladies race in yesterday's Milo Marathon eliminations in Puerto Princesa.

P. Princesa showcases 'gems' in Asian moto kickoff

RIDERS FROM 12 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES have confirmed their participation in what promises to be a blockbuster kickoff of the FIM-UAM Asian Motocross Championships slated March 4 in Puerto Princesa City.

The 2007 Puerto Princesa Motocross Masters of Asia highlights the host city's foundation day and is assured of full backing by the city government led by Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn.

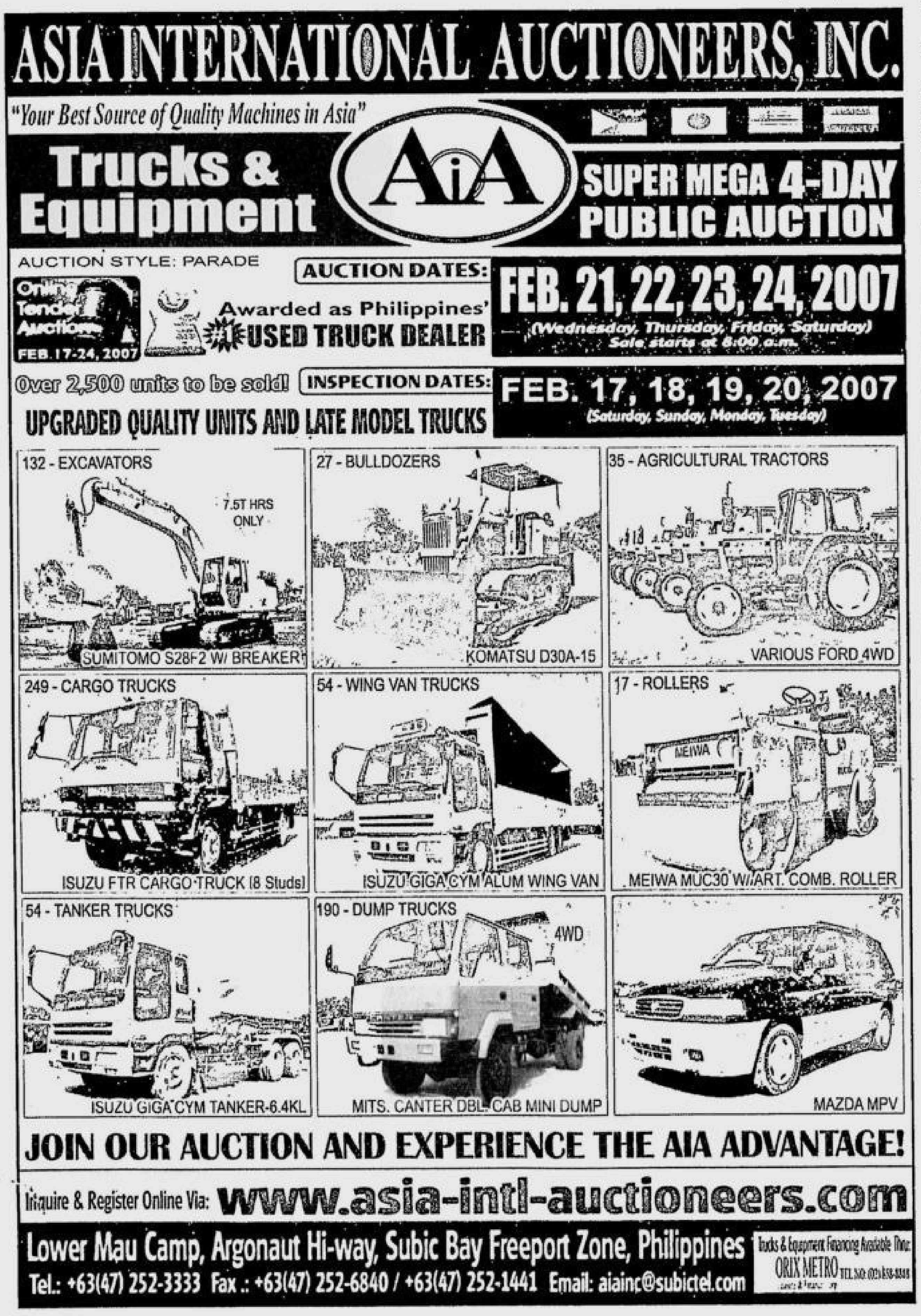
The races will be held at the FIM-compliant motocross track adjacent to the city hall.

Hagedorn, Vice Mayor Lucilo Bayron and city administrator Agustin Rocamora, are supervising the preparations to showcase the city's hospitality and culture and the residents' flair for color and fanfare to the visiting riders and tourists.

"There will be an influx of tourist who, aside from enjoying the peaceful ambience, the beauty and splendor of our natural frontiers and scenic spots, will get the chance to witness the biggest motorsports spectacle featuring champion riders from the Asia-Pacific region," said Hagedorn.

The Asian Motocross Championship Series will tour the Asia-Pacific region through Xtreme Worx Philippines, the event's regional promoter. The second leg will be held on June 10 in Guam.

The Puerto Princesa races will be joined in by riders from host Philippines, United Arab Emirates, Mongolia, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Britain, Indonesia and China and the Chinese special region of Hong Kong and the United States territory of Guam.



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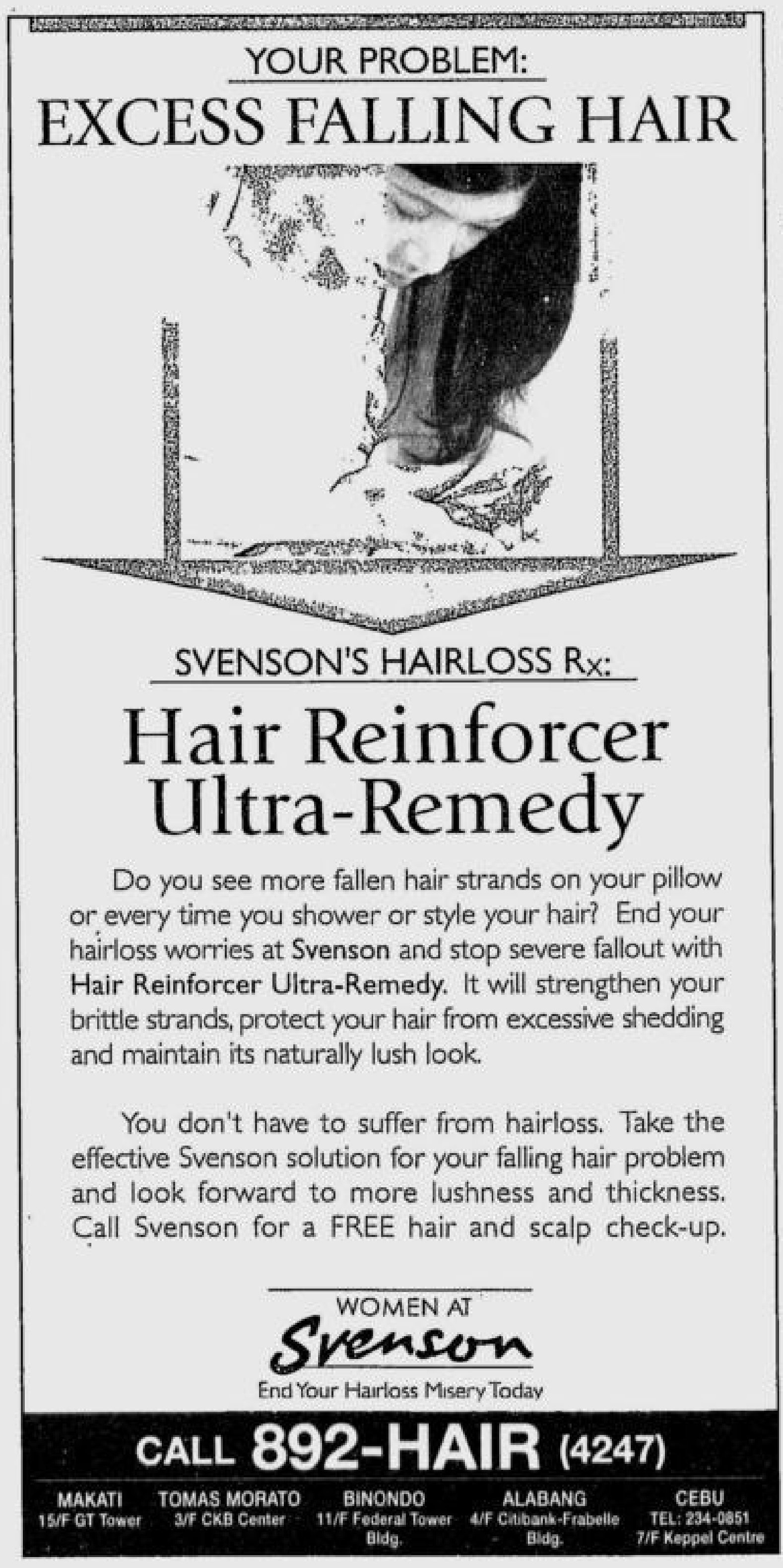

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Santillan tackles Japanese

FORMER ORIENTAL and Pacific Boxing Federation (OPBF) welterweight champion Rev Santillan goes up against Japanese Shana Kisaragi in a 10-round non-title fight today at the Archaic Hall in Amagasaki, Hyogo, Japan.

The fight will be Santillan's tuneup for his clash with reigning champ Taesei Marumoto, who is seeing action in the card's main event against compatriot Yoshinori Takenaka.

The Iloilo City-raised Santillan parades a 22-3-1 (16 KOs) slate, while Kisaragi totes a 5-3-3 (2 KOs) card.

Santillan originally wanted to challenge Marumoto in this card, but the champion's camp reportedly asked that they be allowed one more title defense before facing the Filipino, who had beaten him in their previous encounter.

Trainer Brix Flores and manager Rex "Wakee" Salud will be at Santillan's corner. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

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BSP pushes sale of $1-B bonds to OFWs

IN THIS ISSUE

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- **RP tax effort increased** to 14.3% in '06 /B16

Move can shift focus from spending to investing

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has urged the national government to offer this year as much as $1 billion in retail treasury bonds (RTBs) to overseas Filipino workers and their beneficiaries.

In a report to Malacañang on initiatives to improve the environment for offshore workers, the BSP said it had taken steps together with the Department of Finance and the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) "to finalize the proposed issuance of RTBs for OFWs."

"This is aimed at encouraging them and their beneficiaries to channel their remittances to investment instruments," the BSP reported.

The proposed issuance, targeted within the year but not necessarily in one single sale, aims to divert more OFW inflows for economic development while giving OFW households lucrative investment outlets.

"These savings and investments will help prepare OFWs for future reintegration into the Philippine economy and help provide additional funding for

BSP/ B2

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RP to spend $5.6B to service debts

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES IS EXPECTED to spend about $5.63 billion on foreign debt servicing this year, lower than the earlier programmed expense of $7.1 billion, due to savings from government-led debt prepayments and bond swap initiatives.

Official documents showed that of the total expenditures for foreign debt this year, $3.06 billion would represent principal amounts while interest expense would account for $2.57 billion.

The lower offshore debt service requirements this year is seen supporting the country's continued surplus in its balance of payments, which measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is expecting a BOP surplus of $1.6 billion this year but this target is conservative given a cautious outlook on the global economy.

Under the BOP, any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident like importation or debt servicing is a deficit item while any which gives rise to a receipt like borrowing, exporting or inward remittance is a surplus item.

The country posted a seven-year high BOP surplus of $3.77 billion in 2006, exceeding the $2.4-billion surplus a year ago and the government's target of $2.8 billion.

The country's BOP performance last year mirrored the rise in the gross international reserves to an all-time high of $23 billion even as the public sector took advantage of robust dollar inflows to prepay foreign debts during the year.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas alone, for instance, preterminated about $1.4 billion worth of debts last year, including $220 million in remaining obligations to the International Monetary Fund that triggered an early graduation from the post-program monitoring arrangement with the Fund.

The country has been considered a "prolonged user" of IMF resources, with 23 programs with the Bretton Woods institution consisting mainly of standby arrangements. It is only in recent years that the use of Fund resources has slowed down.

As of end-September last year, the country's foreign debt stock inched up to $54.1 billion as of end-September from $53.9 billion in end-June on higher offshore borrowings by banks and some local investors' sale of foreign bonds issued by Philippine borrowers.

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Losing from land

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

AS IT NEARS ITS 20TH YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION—twice its originally intended time frame—the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) remains far from a satisfactory completion. Part of the problem, aside from the usual budgetary and legal hurdles directly besetting the program, traces to our weak land administration system. Before a country can even redistribute rural landholdings effectively, it needs to ensure that the system of surveying, mapping, valuing, titling and registering land actually works. And herein lies our problem. In this country, the land administration system is not only weak; it is downright defective.

Multiplicity

To begin with, too many government agencies are involved in land administration, including the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Land Registration Authority (LRA), and the judicial courts themselves. This has led to multiple systems of land policies, recording and documentation, and data and information on land that are neither integrated nor coherent. And because these agencies are physically dispersed, procedures are time-consuming and non-client friendly. A study showed that registering a land transaction in the Philippines could take anywhere from 14 days to two years, against an average of only 2.5 hours in Thailand. In the state of New South Wales in Australia, you don't even have to leave home to do it; you can do it online.

We also have a confusing multiplicity of land laws and regulations, including the CARP Law (RA 6657), Commonwealth Act 141, RA 8371, and PD 1529, to name a few. But most of these are obsolete and inconsistent with current realities. Moreover, these have made procedures and processes too tedious, legalistic and technical for the common citizen.

Conflicting titles

There are multiple processes, both judicial and administrative, for land titling. This has led to overlaps and duplication of titles, nonstandardization of technical descriptions, and delays in resolution of land disputes. Moreover, there are too many documentary requirements for registering a title, and this has discouraged many from formalizing the registration of issued titles or patents.

Adding further to the confusion is the multiplicity of land titling instruments, including patents, decrees, and a whole alphabet soup of CLOAs, EPs, TCTs/OCTs, CADTs, and so on. These arise from the different forms of land ownership awards and titles as provided in the various relevant laws. Again, all these have led to occasional overlaps and conflicting issuances even for the same pieces of land. Worse, all these ultimately lead to multiple opportunities for graft and corruption.

Assessments and taxes

Land valuation is yet another area of confusion. There is a multiplicity of agencies that undertake valuation, including the LGU-Assessors' Office, BIR, DAR, DENR, DPWH, and so on. As such, there is a lack of standards for valuation and assessment. Understatement of land transaction values is common, along with distorted and outdated property values. Significant revenue opportunities are therefore lost especially to local governments, where valuation has also been prone to politicization.

And then there is the multiplicity of taxes. There is a plethora of taxes on land, including the real property tax, capital gains tax, documentary stamp tax, transfer tax, and so on. Put together, they make it costly to legalize and formalize land ownership and titles, and drive people to resort to informal (translation: underground and sometimes illegal) land deals that are estimated to account for 60 percent of land transactions. This effectively shrinks the formal land markets, and with it the business of the banking sector, and ultimately, local investment and development. In the end, it actually reduces the taxes collected from the sector, as the base for real property taxation has been reduced by as much as 60 percent.

Urgent fixes

The above all indicate that we are losing so much from lack of a strong land administration system. And it is the poor who stand to lose more from the situation, as the rich can always buy their way out of the deficiencies in the system, or even use their money to twist it in their favor.

Four bills pending in Congress promise to fix all these, at least one of which can still make it if our legislators only give it the urgent priority it deserves. The Land Administration Reform Act (Lara) would unify all agencies involved in land administration into a Land Administration Authority. The Free Patent Law Amendments (FPLA) would improve security of tenure by facilitating the legitimization of de facto but informal land transactions. The Valuation Reform Act (VRA) would unify and rationalize the land valuation system under a National Appraisal Authority. And the Valuation Professionalization Act would regulate, supervise and professionalize real estate practitioners and assessors, strengthen accountability and protect public interest in real property transactions. With a mere few days left, these are among the impending casualties of an unlucky (for all of us, that is) 13th Congress that chose to spend the greater part of its time in things other than legislation.

Eagle Watch

The public is invited to the next Ateneo Eagle Watch Economic and Political Briefing to be held in the morning of Feb. 21 at the Ateneo Rockwell Campus. For details and reservations, contact Joannie Tongol at 929-7035 (e-mail joannietongol@gmail.com).

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

BSP pushes sale of $1-B bonds to OFWs

From page B1

government requirements, including for infrastructure development," the report said.

The offering size proposed by the BSP was based on the assumption that OFWs could set aside about 10 percent of their earnings for investments.

The issuance of RTBs also helps the BSP's monetary policy as a way of siphoning off strong inflows from OFWs.

"For their part, commercial banks have offered OFWs specialized investment products and services related to insurance, pension and real estate," the BSP said. "Direct payment schemes of banks are also available for the added convenience of the OFWs' beneficiaries."

In line with its major advocacy programs, the BSP is conducting financial literacy campaigns (FLCs) for OFWs and their beneficiaries together with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

"The FLCs emphasize the importance of saving and inform the participants of alternative opportunities for their remittances such as placements in financial instruments and investments in business ventures," the BSP reported.

Based on a survey of four rural banks and one cooperative bank in the three regions where the BSP conducted FLCs, microfinance loans attributed to OFWs have risen in their areas, particularly in Tuguegarao, Cagayan.

Microfinance is the provision of small, unsecured loans to the poor to help them start their own businesses.

OFW remittances coursed through the banking system surged to $11.4 billion in the first 11 months of 2006 from $6.1 billion in 2000. These remittances boosted the supply of foreign exchange, helping stabilize the exchange rate and provided valuable support to economic growth, particularly through strong personal consumption expenditures.

The BSP expects the remittances coursed through banks to grow by another 10 percent this year to $13.5 billion.

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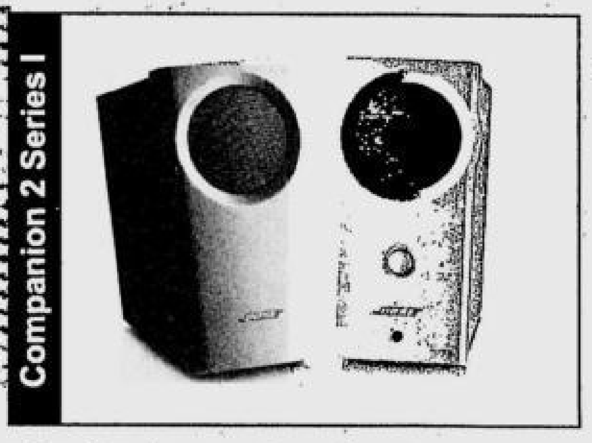

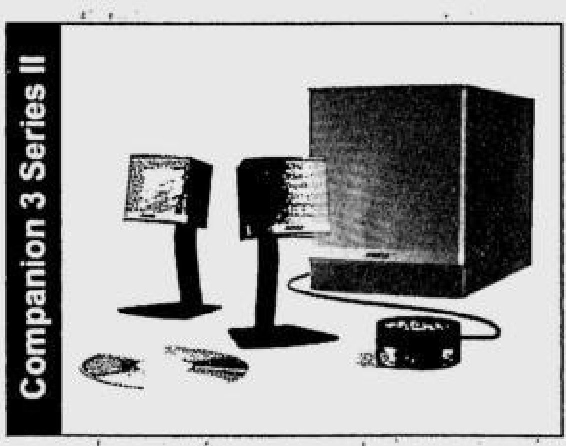

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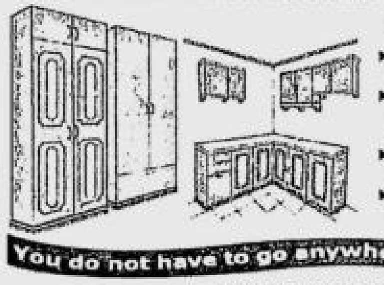

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RP, China, Vietnam pursue Spratlys project

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC EXPLORATION Corp. (PNOC-EC), China National Offshore Oil Co. (CNOOC) and Vietnam Oil and Gas Corp. (PetroVietnam) will conduct further seismic studies on an area including the disputed Spratlys after determining that it has good potential to yield hydrocarbons.

Pedro Aquino Jr., officer in charge at PNOC-EC parent Philippine National Oil Co., said that after conducting 2D seismic surveys on the area, the three national oil firms would likely gather 3D seismic data to determine what deposits the area contained.

"We have already identified areas for 3D seismic. Indications of hydrocarbon presence are very strong, but it has yet to be determined whether these deposits are oil or gas," he said.

After analyzing these new data, he said the group could negotiate for another agreement, this time for actual drilling of wells.

But whether or not to conduct actual drilling was still subject to question as the area covered by the tripartite agreement allegedly included some of the Philippines' territorial waters.

The resolution of this issue, should the group agree to conduct drillings in the area, would depend on the Department of Foreign Affairs.

PNOC, CNOOC and PetroVietnam's tripartite agreement covered three years of seismic survey and research over a 143,000-square-kilometer area in the South China Sea, which included the disputed Spratlys.

Under the agreement, the three state firms will gather, process and interpret data from the identified area to determine whether or not there are oil and gas reserves there.

RP, CHINA/ B4

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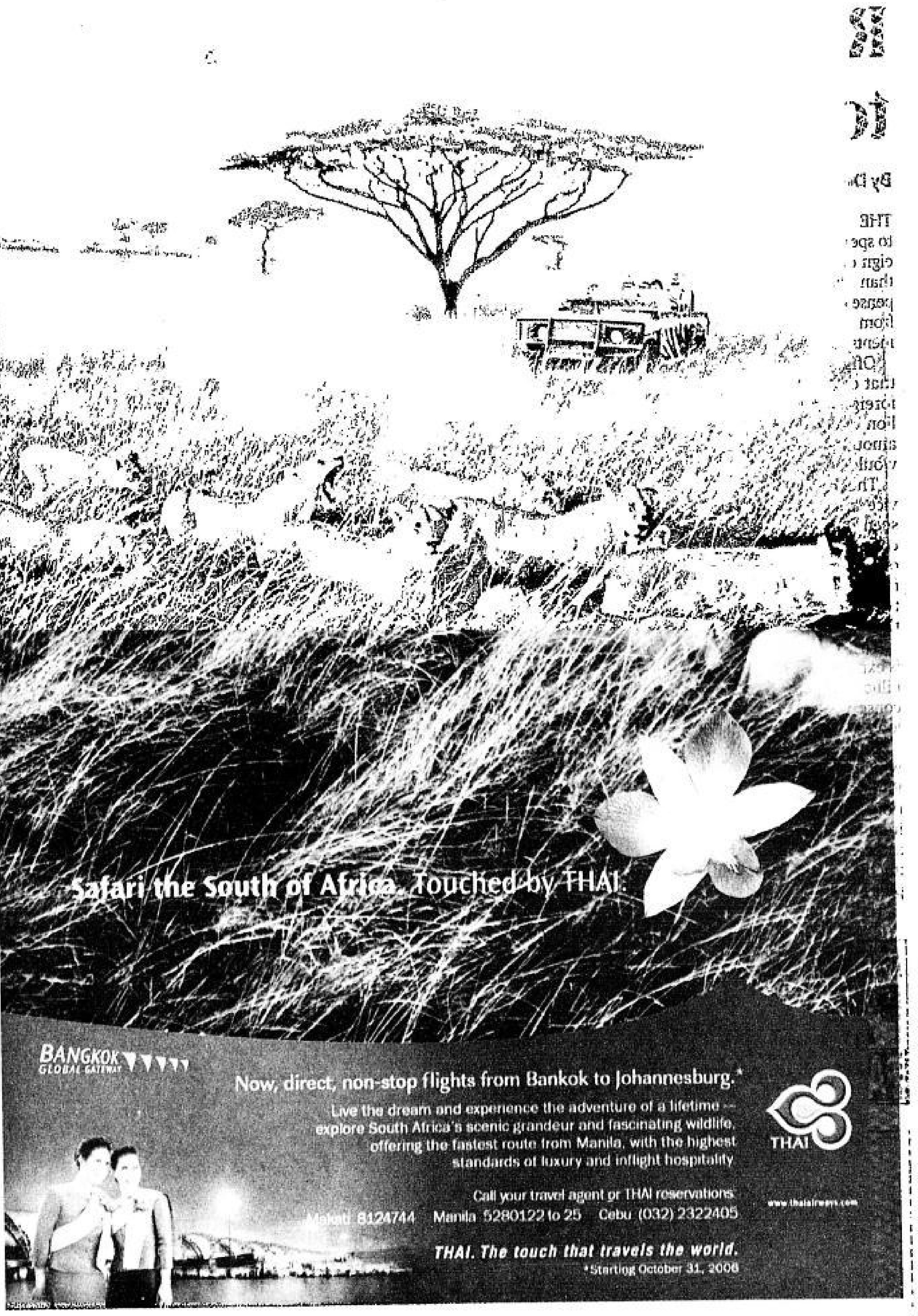

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RP's first RFID implementation by Globe subsidiary makes it to the 2007 Mobile Innovation Awards

G-Xchange, Inc. (GXI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Globe Telecom, made the shortlist of international finalists in the Most Innovative Technology Development Category of the GSM Association's (GSMA) prestigious 2007 Global Mobile Awards.

GXI was nominated this year for its pioneering GPass service, the world's first contactless ticketing solution with a mobile leg. GPass lets Globe and TM subscribers wirelessly pay for their MRT3 train fare with just a tap of a wireless Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip. GPass is made even more convenient by its integration with GCash, the revolutionary electronic payment system that won Best Messaging Service at the 2005 GSM Awards.

The integration of GPass with GCash lets subscribers reload their GPass chips through their mobile phones anytime and anywhere. Users also get real-time updates via SMS to confirm transactions and to remind them of their outstanding balance.

GXI president Rizza Maniego-Eala welcomed the nomination as a major achievement for the company as it continues to develop even more groundbreaking m-commerce solutions by making money transfer and micro payment transactions more affordable and accessible to a larger public. "GXI is all about making people's lives better through mobile technology. We feel that this nomination for the 2007 Mobile Innovation Awards shows that we are on the right track," she said.

The six finalists will be presented for judging at the Mobile Innovation Forum in February as part of the 3GSM World Congress, the world's largest annual mobile industry event, which will be held this year in Barcelona, Spain. The prestigious Mobile Innovation Awards is a venue for small, young, and upstart companies to present their ideas to leading industry investors and mobile operators via a high-profile international event.

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Stocks seen to weaken on profit-taking

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LOCAL EQUITIES MARKET MAY HAVE already started its long-anticipated correction phase and stock prices will likely continue to weaken in the coming week.

In a weekly research note, AB Capital Securities told its clients that the market appeared "extended, stretched and overbought."

"We should see momentum finally tapering off in the coming sessions," the broker said, adding that it saw early signs of a "distribution" or a short-term top around the 3,300-point level for the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi).

Last week, the index closed at 3,245.81 points, representing a slight, 0.71-percent decline over the previous week's close of 3,269.18—the first time in several weeks that the market barometer registered a week-on-week loss.

Prompted by profit-taking, value turnover was even heavier with an average of P4.4 billion changing hands on a daily basis last week, compared to P3.8 billion a week ago.

AB Capital advised its clients to "hold for now," explaining that traders "lost some appetite [for buying stocks] after getting some disappointing results on the economic and corporate fronts recently."

"Exports had its first year-on-year drop in 10 months while corporate earnings results of Ayala Land Inc. and Globe Telecoms came out a bit disappointing," the note added. "To correct some excesses, the market may consolidate and trek lower in the coming months."

In a separate briefing note, Abacus Securities Corp. technical analyst Lawrence Gonzaga advised clients to "sell on rally," noting that a short-term support line on the PSEi was broken last week.

"This was a signal to take profits," he said. "The weekly chart shows that the [index] has hit the upper end of its uptrend channel. Prices tend to pull back after hitting this line."

He added that the stock market index was now settling into a consolidation phase and that it was still "unclear" whether the correction during the previous trading sessions was over.

Gonzaga told clients to keep an eye on the 3,190 level, saying that the index may be in for more declines if it drops below this level.

AB Capital, however, sounded a more optimistic note over the medium term, saying it expected the country's economic and corporate fundamentals to remain bullish in the foreseeable future.

"Everything will eventually revert to its bullish mode by the middle of the year," the broker said.

RP, China …

From page B3

The three national oil firms will equally share the costs involved in conducting seismic research within the agreement area, which come up to around $7.14 million over the three-year period.

The tripartite agreement covered pre-exploration activities only and did not involve any drillings or actual explorations.

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Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
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Camp John Hay	350,000	300,000
Canlubang	550,000	420,000
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
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Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
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Manila Polo	Please Call	2,700,000
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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/1,300,000*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*/Pls Call**
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Camp John Hay	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Canlubang Golf	-	420,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	50,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	60,000
Club Filipino	90,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*	120,000*
Luisita Golf	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls Call	12,600,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,600,000
Manila Polo	2,750,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	-
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	-
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	220,000	Pls. Call/550,000**
Mt. Malarayal A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	-	1,500,000
Subic Golf	190,000	-
Summit Point A	300,000	-
The Palms Country Club	380,000	330,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	320,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	650,000	620,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	620,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	200,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	Pls. Call	-
Wack Wack Golf	Pls. Call	7,000,000

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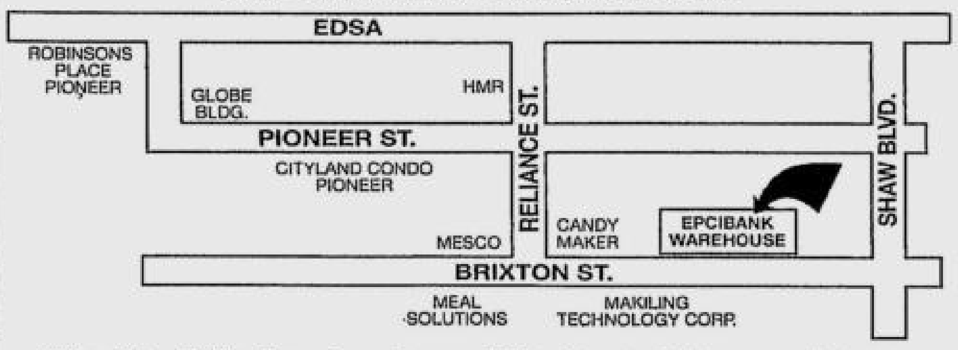
February 24, 2007,
1:00 PM, Saturday
Molina Hall, Equitable PCI Bank
Tower 2, H.V. dela Costa St. cor
Makati Ave., Makati City

THE GRAND CAR-A-OK! CHALLENGE®
A Bidding Date Special this February

CODE	BRAND / TYPE	YEAR	COLOR	PLATE NO.	MIN. BID PRICE (PhP)	CODE	BRAND / TYPE	YEAR	COLOR	PLATE NO.	MIN. BID PRICE (PhP)
001	Honda City Sedan	2004	Satellite Silver Metalic	XNG 114	369,000.00	044	Nissan Serena Wagon	2003	Silver	XHU 820	527,000.00
002	Honda Civic ESI 1.6 Sedan	2003	Red Rock Pearl	FFJ 141	374,000.00	045	Nissan Terrano 4x4 Wagon	2003	Black	XHT 610	510,000.00
003	Honda Civic LXI 4-Dr Sedan*	1996	Maroon	UKL 774	181,600.00	046	Nissan Urvan Escapade Van	2006	Red	ZCP 665	747,000.00
004	Honda Civic VTI Sedan*	2000	White	WRS 178	280,000.00	047	Nissan X-trail Wagon 4x2	2005	White	XRP 225	711,000.00
005	Honda CRV Wagon	2003	Satin Silver	XKE 945	585,000.00	048	Nissan X-trail Wagon 4x4 Wagon	2006	Red	No plate	950,000.00
006	Honda CRV Wagon*	2003	Silver/Gray	AEK 447	544,000.00	049	Isuzu Crosswind XT Wagon	2005	Blue	XLX 748	674,500.00
007	Toyota Corolla Altis Sedan	2005	White	No plate	450,000.00	050	Isuzu D-Max Pick-up	2004	White	VCY 677	648,000.00
008	Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6E Sedan	2004	Blue gray	XSD 122	477,000.00	051	Isuzu Highlander Wagon	2001	Red (2-tone)	XAB 345	368,000.00
009	Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6E Sedan*	2003	White	XHU 261	433,500.00	052	Isuzu NKR Four Wheeler	2005	White	ZAK 670	646,000.00
010	Toyota Revo DLX Wagon	2004	Lithium (silver)	XLW 604	396,000.00	053	Isuzu Sportivo Wagon	2006	Black	ZCE 566	747,000.00
011	Toyota Revo VX200 Wagon	2003	Silver	VCC 271	425,000.00	054	Isuzu Sportivo A/T Wagon	2005	Black	XRY 754	774,000.00
012	Toyota Vios 1.5G Sedan	2005	Beige	XSR 301	459,000.00	055	Isuzu Trooper 4x2 LS Wagon	2003	Satin Silver	JOS 222	782,000.00
013	Mits. L-200 Strada 4x4 pick-up*	2000	Maroon/Silver	WLK 409	448,000.00	056	Isuzu Trooper LS Wagon	2003	Black(2 Tone)	XML 635	790,500.00
014	Mitsubishi Adventure GLX Wagon	2005	White	ZBH 402	486,000.00	057	Mazda 3 Sedan	2005	Black	XTU 726	738,000.00
015	Mitsubishi Adventure GLS Wagon	2004	Imola Red	XLE 392	441,000.00	058	Ford Escape 4x4 A/T Wagon	2005	White	RBS 625	882,000.00
016	Mitsubishi Adventure GLS Wagon	2004	White	VDE 278	585,000.00	059	Ford Escape 4x4 Wagon	2005	Silver	ZBD 193	836,000.00
017	Mitsubishi Adventure GL Wagon	2004	Silver	XPW 897	378,000.00	060	Ford Escape XLS Wagon*	2004	Silver	XSL 329	616,500.00
018	Mitsubishi Adventure GLS Wagon	2005	Red (2-tone)	TYE 622	456,000.00	061	Ford Everest 4x2 Wagon	2004	White w/ gray	RAR 835	738,000.00
019	Mitsubishi Adventure GLX Wagon	2005	White	ZAP 193	522,000.00	062	Ford Everest Wagon	2005	Gold	XTL 544	756,000.00
020	Mitsubishi Adventure GLX Wagon	2005	Green	ZAE 105	522,500.00	063	Ford Lynx GSI Sedan	2005	Silver	XTX 137	441,000.00
021	Mitsubishi Adventure GLX Wagon	2005	Green	ZAE 199	504,000.00	064	Ford Lynx GSI Sedan	2004	Black	RAV 112	405,000.00
022	Mitsubishi Adventure GLX Wagon	2003	Red	CTB 613	357,000.00	065	Ford Lynx Sedan*	2003	Silver	HCR 777	314,500.00
023	Mitsubishi Adventure GS Wagon	2003	Blue (2-tone)	LMB 957	433,500.00	066	Ford New Escape 2.3 Wagon	2006	Silver	ZCY 163	902,500.00
024	Mitsubishi Adventure SS Wagon*	2002	Maroon/Silver	XDY 306	391,000.00	067	Ford Ranger 4x2 Pass Van	2004	White	RBD 435	378,000.00
025	Mitsubishi Adventure Wagon GLS	2005	Silver	XSB 834	513,000.00	068	Ford Ranger Trekker Pick-up	2003	Red	GTS 988	425,000.00
026	Mitsubishi L-300 FB	2003	White	XKL 386	323,000.00	069	Ford Ranger Pick-up	2004	Silver	XSV 840	423,000.00
027	Mitsubishi L-300 Versa Van	1995	Orange (2-tone)	UFC 539	104,000.00	070	Opel Astra 4-Dr Sedan*	2001	Black	XDC 918	224,000.00
028	Mitsubishi Lancer MX Sedan	2000	Green	WMS 225	224,000.00	071	Opel Astra Sedan 1.6 4-Dr Sedan	2001	Blue	WTX 707	216,000.00
029	Mitsubishi Montero	2006	Black	XRP 470	1,125,000.00	072	Chevrolet Optra 4-Dr Sedan	2004	Blue	XRM 236	387,000.00
030	Mitsubishi Space Gear GL	2003	Violet/Silver	XJL 125	459,000.00	073	Chevrolet Optra 1.6 4Dr Sedan	2004	Black	XSN 348	424,000.00
031	Nissan Cefiro Elite Sedan	2000	Black	No plate	280,000.00	074	Chevrolet Optra Notchback 1.6 LS	2005	Black	XSZ 342	450,000.00
032	Nissan Exalta Sedan DS	2003	Red	XHT 658	323,000.00	075	Chevrolet Ventura Wagon	2001	Red	No plate	360,000.00
033	Nissan Exalta Sentra GS Grandeur*	2003	Silver	XNE 310	314,500.00	076	Chevrolet Venture Wagon	2004	Champagne silver	XRG 513	720,000.00
034	Nissan Frontier III Pick-up	2004	Royal silver	FFR 428	486,000.00	077	KIA Panoramic KC2700	2002	White	XFE 602	221,000.00
035	Nissan Frontier Pick-up	2005	White	ZAW 212	476,000.00	078	Kia Picanto Sedan	2005	Orange	VDS 143	342,000.00
036	Nissan Patrol 3.0 Di	2006	Polar White	ALX 88	1,980,000.00	079	Kia Pregio Van	2003	White	XKU 119	340,000.00
037	Nissan Patrol Wagon	2005	Black	XTL 261	1,800,000.00	080	Volkswagen Passat 4-Dr Sedan	2004	White	XMY 631	720,000.00
038	Nissan Patrol Wagon	2002	Black	GSW 107	850,000.00	081	Volvo V70 2.0 Sedan	2003	White	No plate	1,020,000.00
039	Nissan Power Eagle DLX Pick-up	1995	Red	TSL 678	72,000.00	082	Chrysler Grand Voyager Van	2002	Blue	No plate	544,000.00
040	Nissan Sentra GS Sedan	2004	Silver	XNK 728	405,000.00	083	Suzuki Jimny Wagon	2003	Red	LEI 310	306,000.00
041	Nissan Sentra Exalta Sedan*	2002	Maroon	XBG 935	266,900.00	084	Hyundai Starex GRX	2005	Silver (2-tone)	ZBX 730	902,500.00
042	Nissan Sentra Exalta Sedan*	2001	Black	WTU 878	208,000.00	085	Hyundai Tucson	2006	Silver	ZCT 578	810,540.00
043	Nissan Sentra GX Sedan	2003	White	XFW 865	306,000.00						

*Important: Pls. ensure the Car Code No., Unit Description, Color and Plate No., are indicated, outside the envelope on the space provided for. Vehicles may be viewed at the Bank's warehouse at No. 5 Brixton St. Brgy. Kapitolyo, Pasig City, on the following dates:
Feb. 12 - 13, 2007 (Monday - Tuesday) 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Feb. 19 - 20, 2007 (Monday - Tuesday) 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM



Bidding Rules, Bidding Forms, Proxy Forms and List of Cars for Bidding are available at the Equitable PCI Pasig Warehouse or at the AMDD Makati Office.

A P10,000 deposit (per bid) in CASH or Manager's Check only, payable to Equitable PCI Bank is required, to be enclosed with the accomplished and signed bidding forms (or proxy forms, if applicable), in a SEALED ENVELOPE.

Bidders may submit their sealed bids during the auction date at the venue, or, on or before February 23, 2007 at

ASSET MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL DIVISION (AMDD)
11/F Equitable PCI Bank Tower 1
H.V. dela Costa St. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City

For inquiries, please call telephone nos.:
8784706 / 8407000 loc. 4842,
Contact persons: Ayds or Ariel

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 9, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	8	8.2	7.8	8.2	103,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	54.5	56	54.5	56	697,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70	71	69.5	71	2,290,100
China Banking Corp.	760	770	760	770	840
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	35	40	35	39	5,500
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.49	2,530,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	96.5	98	96.5	97.5	300,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	61	62	61	62	8,034,700
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	51	53	51	53	4,000
Philippine National Bank	49.5	50.5	49.5	50	60,500
Phil. Savings Bank	55	55	55	55	7,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	42.5	42.5	42.5	42.5	355,400
Security Bank Corp.	77.5	78	77.5	77.5	717,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	62	62.5	62	62	32,800
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	210,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5.1	5.2	5	5.2	469,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1655	1650	1655	1,080
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.86	1.86	271,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	490	490	487.5	487.5	1,100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2065	2100	2065	2080	2,540
Ivantage Corp.	1.64	1.66	1.64	1.66	1,055,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.6	32,720,000
First Gen Corp.	56.5	56.5	55.5	56	2,881,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	76	77.5	76	77.5	1,102,200
Manila Electric Co. A	72	75	72	74.5	802,100
Manila Electric Co. B	72.5	76	72.5	75.5	1,572,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	10	10	9.9	9.9	5,152,000
Petron Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.6	4.7	4,285,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	560,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,705,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.65	3.8	3.65	3.8	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.5	305,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	44	45	44	45	1,240,600
RFM Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.38	586,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	1,111,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	450,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	65.5	64.5	65.5	122,300
San Miguel Corp. B	79.5	79.5	79	79.5	185,600
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.04	2.1	2.02	2.04	2,519,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	18.5	16.75	16.75	29,301,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.52	1.56	1.5	1.5	38,398,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.3	4.45	4.3	4.45	1,813,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.6	3.75	3.5	3.6	104,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8	8	8	5,413,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	1,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	6.1	5.8	6	928,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies, Inc.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	2,569,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	15,420,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	56,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	67,000,000
Ayala Corp.	650	655	635	635	149,890
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.72	1,550,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	7.9	8	7.8	8	13,993,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	9.6	10	9.2	9.9	7,093,000
AJO Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.07	0.0675	0.0675	42,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.15	207,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	8,450,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	468,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	674,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.64	1.64	100,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.55	3.6	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	20,700
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.4	3.65	3.4	3.65	34,579,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.3	953,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5.3	5	5.2	3,970,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	230,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.3	3.35	3.1	3.1	181,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.75	12	11	11.25	1,871,100
Medco Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	700,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	100,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.6	6.1	6.2	3,533,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.16	2.3	2.16	2.2	8,896,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	44,700,000
Prime Orion Phils., Inc.	0.215	0.225	0.21	0.21	7,900,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	52,000
Solid Group, Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.165	6,090,000
SM Investments Corp.	395	400	390	392.5	337,750
South China Resources Inc.	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.12	1,651,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.7	1.74	1.7	1.74	170,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	250,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16	16.75	16	16.5	68,989,900
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	590,000
Belle Corp.	1.26	1.3	1.26	1.28	15,529,000
A. Brown Co. Inc.	1.38	1.44	1.38	1.42	4,853,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.47	2,840,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.65	3.7	3.65	3.7	133,000
C&P Homes Inc.	2.1	2.26	2.08	2.26	5,117,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	750,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	170,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.74	0.76	0.74	0.74	24,150,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.62	1.62	659,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0625	0.0675	0.0625	0.0675	12,000,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	1.78	1.86	1.78	1.82	169,496,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.22	0.25	0.22	0.24	2,870,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.22	0.25	0.22	0.25	1,010,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	63,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	29,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	7,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.52	6,030,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.85	0.88	0.85	0.85	6,590,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	4,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	800,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.65	2.7	2.6	2.7	59,003,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5	5	4.9	4.9	225,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	10,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.1	2.28	2.1	2.24	411,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18	18.25	17.5	17.75	2,363,600
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.7	0.73	0.7	0.72	76,910,000
SM Development Corp.	3.7	3.8	3.65	3.65	1,645,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	12	10,174,600
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.63	0.63	1,020,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	3,700,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	24.25	23	24.25	378,500
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1	1.02	1	1.02	58,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2.06	2.12	2.04	2.06	29,568,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1365	1365	1360	1360	56,810
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.9	7	6.7	6.9	7,064,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2475	2560	2475	2550	204,550
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.34	7,280,000
Ionics Inc.	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.7	317,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	5,900,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	326,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.3	2.34	2.28	2.32	1,702,000
Philweb Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	232,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4	275,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24.75	24.75	24.75	24.75	473,200
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	5,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.2	1,048,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.36	0.39	0.36	0.38	1,010,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.74	0.76	1,250,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	77,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.14	2.16	2.14	2.14	960,000
Paxys Inc.	25	27	24.75	27	370,300
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	29,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	298,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	663,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	107,300,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.3	180,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	36,600
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	5,000
Geograce Res. Phil., Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.02	1.04	148,014,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	19,530,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	2,050,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.025	78,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	200,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	2,029,300,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.95	4.05	3.95	3.95	6,552,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.75	52,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.8	0.81	0.77	0.77	1,670,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.52	1.54	1.48	1.5	6,684,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	2,290,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	155,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	30,100,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	174,300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	65,600

CURRENCIES

February 11, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.766812	1.000000	48.4220
Japan	Yen	0.006335	0.008262	0.4001
United Kingdom	Pound	1.501802	1.958500	94.8345
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098128	0.127969	6.1965
Switzerland	Franc	0.615469	0.802633	38.8651
Canada	Dollar	0.648796	0.846095	40.9696
Singapore	Dollar	0.500531	0.652742	31.6071
Australia	Dollar	0.598979	0.781128	37.8238
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.034147	2.652731	128.4505
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204620	0.266845	12.9212
Brunei	Dollar	0.498902	0.650618	31.5042
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022422	0.029240	1.4159
UAE	Dirham	0.208798	0.272294	13.1850
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.304100	63.1471
Korea	Won	0.000820	0.001070	0.0518
China	Yuan**	0.098964	0.129059	6.2493
Argentina	Peso	0.247160	0.322321	15.6074
Brazil	Real	0.365497	0.476644	23.0801
Denmark	Kroner	0.134204	0.175015	8.4746
India	Rupee	0.017424	0.022722	1.1002
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219528	0.286287	13.8626
Mexico	New Peso	0.070028	0.091324	4.4221
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525862	0.685777	33.2067
South Africa	Rand	0.106927	0.139443	6.7521
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023234	0.030300	1.4672

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 8, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 8, 2007

GMA-7 spending ₱1B for studio expansion

By Daxim L. Lucas

GMA NETWORK INC. WILL INvest as much as P1 billion for the construction of a new "state-of-the-art" studio as part of the broadcast firm's expansion program.

Dubbed the GMA Network Center Annex, the project is one of the company's most expensive endeavors to date, according to company officials.

"The total cost of the project is P1 billion," corporate services senior vice president Felipe S. Yalong said in a statement. "This includes the expenses for structure and the broadcast equipment."

Details of the expansion program were made public after the company signed the memorandum of agreement with its contractors.

Construction for the new studio building began on November 2005 and is now 20-percent completed. The company said it is running 45 days ahead of schedule.

The four-story building, which is set to be completed and in operation by June 2008, sits on an 18,404-square-meter complex directly across from the GMA Network compound in Quezon City.

Yalong said the construction of the annex building was being funded internally.

GMA Network chair and CEO Felipe L. Gozon said the new studios would help the broadcast firm "keep pace with the demands" of providing "superior quality" programming to its audience.

"Whether in the local front or internationally, we would like to give the viewers only the best," he added.

According to the company, the GMA Network Center annex will also house its studio support facilities, which include technical equipment for broadcast and theater systems, props storage, garage areas, rehearsal rooms, talent dressing and make-up rooms, as well as administrative and production offices.

It will also have a kitchen and mess hall and a souvenir shop.

GMA Network executive vice president Jimmy R. Duavit said the new facility would house the most advanced studios, one of which can accommodate a 1,000-live audience gallery, on top of production support and set construction.

A bridge will connect the annex to the main compound, which will facilitate human traffic and the loading of props and set requirements. A pair of elevators will also be installed, while more than 100 parking slots with mechanical lifts will be built into the design.

The blueprint for the structure was designed by architect Roger Villarosa, based on US designs. Also present during the signing ceremonies were structural engineer Rodin Villarosa and representatives from TCGI Engineers and Meindhart Phils. Inc.

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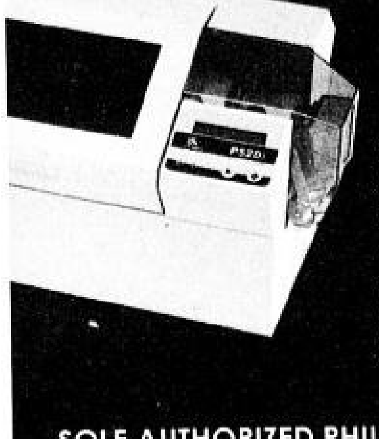

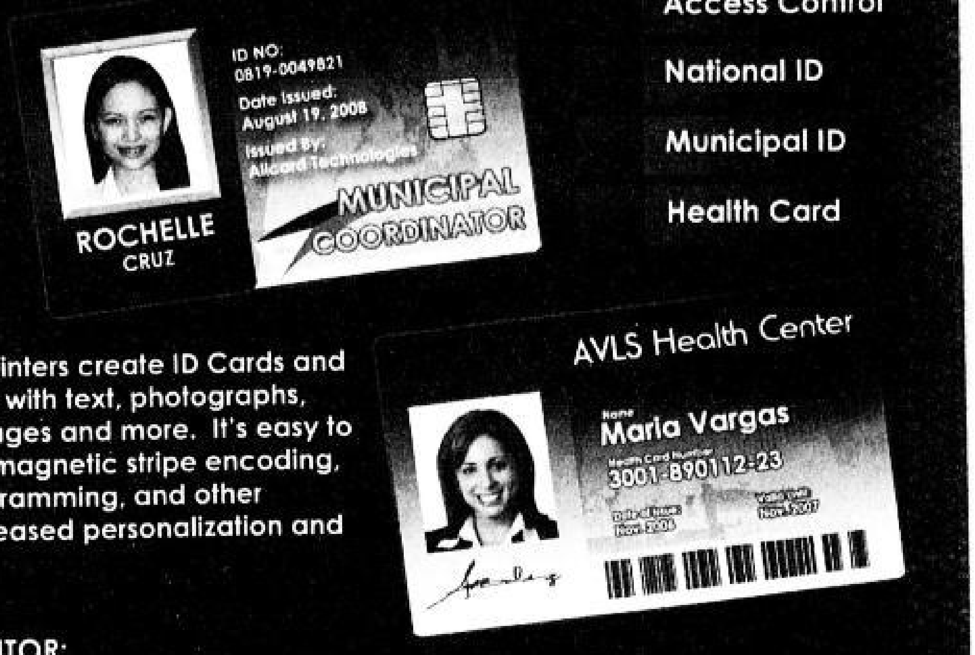

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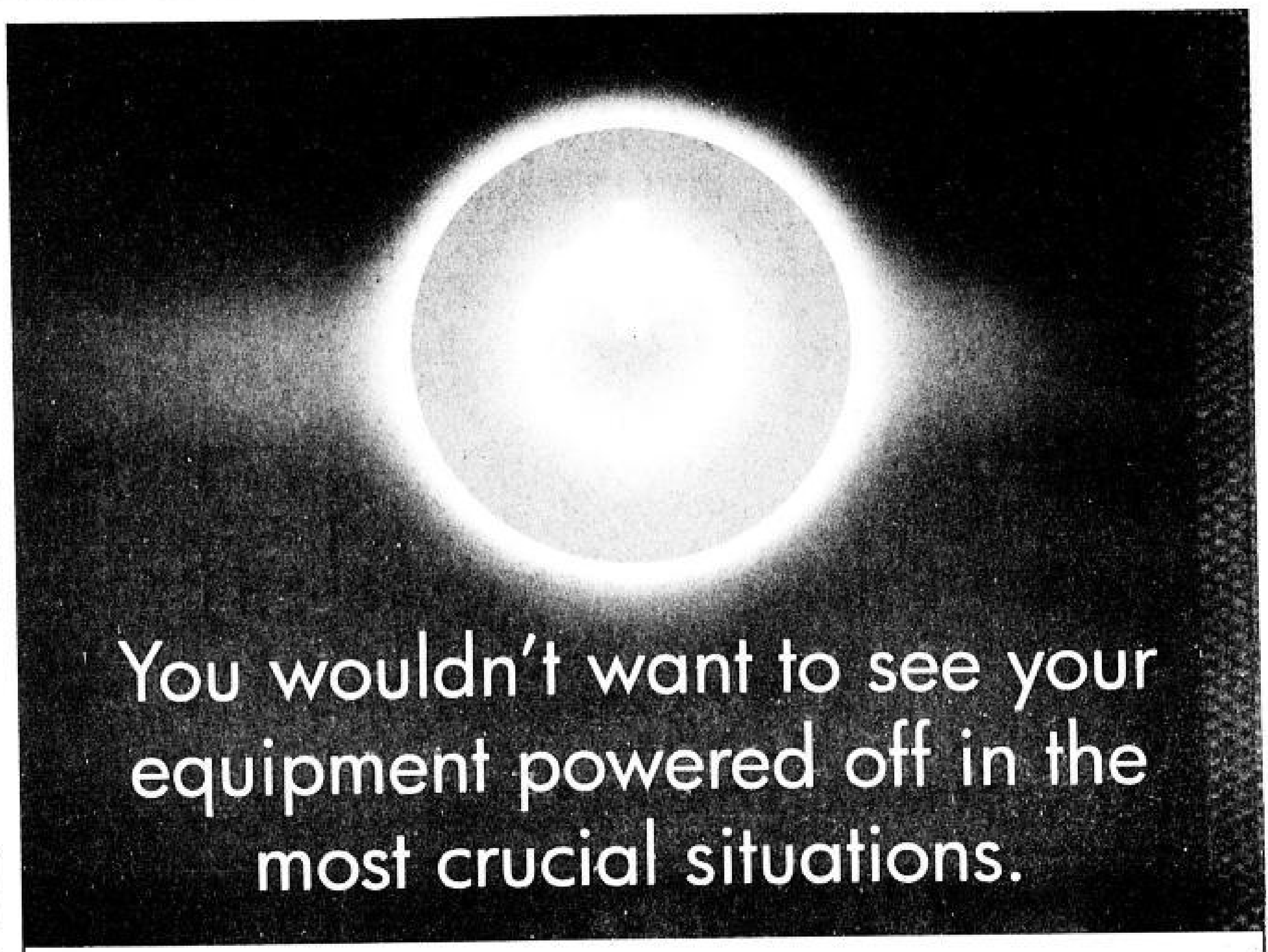
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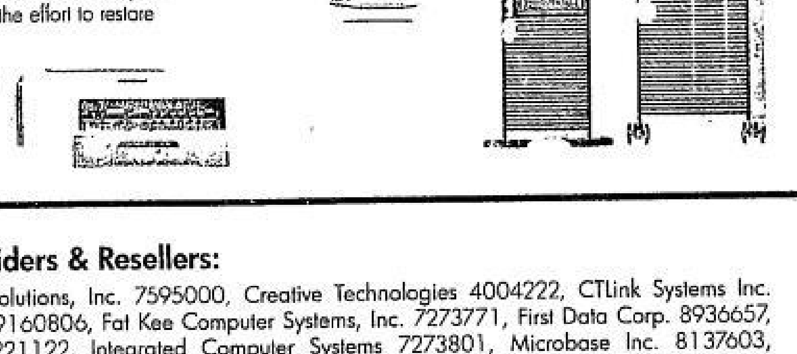

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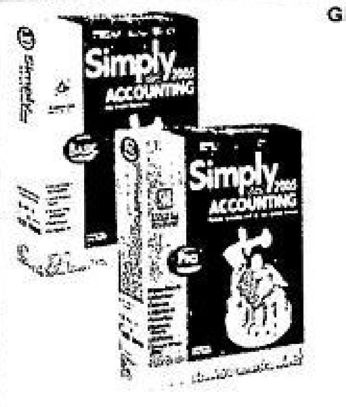

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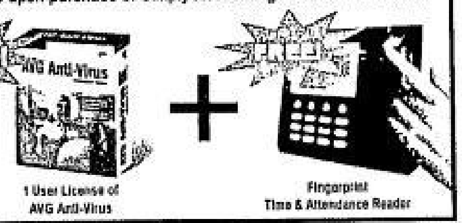

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GOINGS-ON

PAL gets IOSA certification

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES HAS BEEN cited by the International Air Transport Association as the first and only Philippine carrier thus far to hurdle the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), the internationally accepted benchmark for global safety management in airlines.

PAL joins the ranks of 131 other global airlines on the IOSA registry.

Bancassurance deal

CHINA BANKING CORP. and The Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. recently signed an agreement to form Manulife China Bank Life Assurance Corp., a joint venture that will offer life insurance products through China Bank's branches.

The strategic bancassurance alliance is a 95-5 percent venture between Manulife and China Bank.

Security Bank wins PDex award

PHILIPPINE Dealing and Exchange Corp. cited Security Bank Corp. for garnering the highest volume of trading among the top five most active trading participants of the exchange for 2006.

The award was in recognition of Security Bank's contribution and active role in advancing the capital market by generating the highest peso value of trades in government securities executed on the PDEx Interdealer Negotiated Trading System.

Continued buildup of forex reserves urged

IMF says further accumulation of dollars by the BSP is justified given strong inflows

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY Fund has urged the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to further beef up its gross international reserves, now at a record high of $23.76 billion, while maintaining a flexible exchange rate policy.

In its 2006 country report, the IMF executive board said the BSP's current policy to deal with the upward pressure on the exchange rate was "broadly appropriate" but cited the merits of further building up the GIR while the foreign inflows were strong.

"Going forward, we urge continued exchange rate flexibility, even though further reserve accumulation might be justified given that the exchange rate does not appear to be mis-aligned," the IMF board said.

The peso is now trading at a six-year high against the US dollar. On Friday, the local currency peaked at 48.265 before closing at 48.305 to $1.

The accumulation of reserves through dollar purchases at the spot foreign exchange market is an intervention to temper the appreciation of the peso.

"In addition, the (IMF) directors supported the authorities' efforts to shift toward domestic financing and to prepay external debt," the report said.

The GIR, a key indicator of the country's ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy, consists of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from multilateral institutions like the IMF.

The country's current GIR level was buoyed by strong foreign inflows from the government's recent $1-billion global bond float.

Since last year, the foreign reserve position has been supported by strong inflows of foreign exchange from overseas Filipino workers, foreign direct investment and, in recent months, portfolio investments.

Records showed that if the BSP were to unwind about $6 billion in outstanding currency swaps, the GIR level could easily hit nearly $30 billion.

Currency swaps—referring to the simultaneous purchase and sale of currencies over a specific maturity date—are used by the BSP as a hedging mechanism in cases of currency fluctuations and as a monetary tool to prevent the infusion of more pesos into the system.

In a recent briefing, IMF resident representative Reza Baqir said the IMF was supportive of the country's policy mix to deal with capital inflows—a combination of shifting to domestic financing, prepayment of foreign debts ahead of maturity and building up of reserves while keeping a flexible exchange rate.

Baqir said the strong influx of portfolio inflows into the Philippines was a welcome challenge and a phenomenon likewise observed in other countries.

"The challenge is to have sound macroeconomic and financial framework to deal with such capital inflows. Around the world, I think especially in the region, authorities are looking to manage those inflows in a way that they end up being conducive to growth rather than be any risk," Baqir said.

The IMF representative also said that as the current inflation outlook in the country was benign, the BSP could easily deal with the resurgence in capital flows.

RP, US sign deal on property rights

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—THE Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IP Philippines) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) signed a cooperation agreement to further strengthen intellectual property rights use and protection in both countries.

In the memorandum of understanding, the two agencies agreed to improve the administration of intellectual property (IP) protection system; identify the effectiveness of legal protection for and in the use of IP, and develop professional skills through information sharing and exchange and capacity building.

'This technical cooperation agreement is a clear recognition of the importance of intellectual property to economic development and growth," IP Philippines director general Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. said.

"With this MOU, our strategic partnership with USPTO has gone beyond enforcement strategies, it now includes capacity-building for patent examinations in biotechnology, strategies for commercialization of patented technologies, and raising public awareness and education on the importance of IP in today's knowledge economy," he added.

USPTO will provide technical assistance for the development of patents (particularly utility model and industrial design) and trademark examination manuals, and automated patent and trademark examination tools.

"The USPTO appreciates this opportunity to work with the Philippines. We are confident that, together, we will contribute to enhancing the administration of intellectual property rights for IP users in both the Philippines and the United States," Jon W. Dudas, Undersecretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and USPTO Director, said.

IP Philippines and USPTO will exchange information on IPR-related matters and compile and publish information materials such as reviews of best practices. The two offices will likewise provide each other copies of their respective laws and regulations, manuals and guidelines for examiners, and other references such as literature, statistics, judgments and decisions on intellectual property cases.

The signing of the MoU took place during the recent IP Trading Ideas Symposium hosted by IP Australia.

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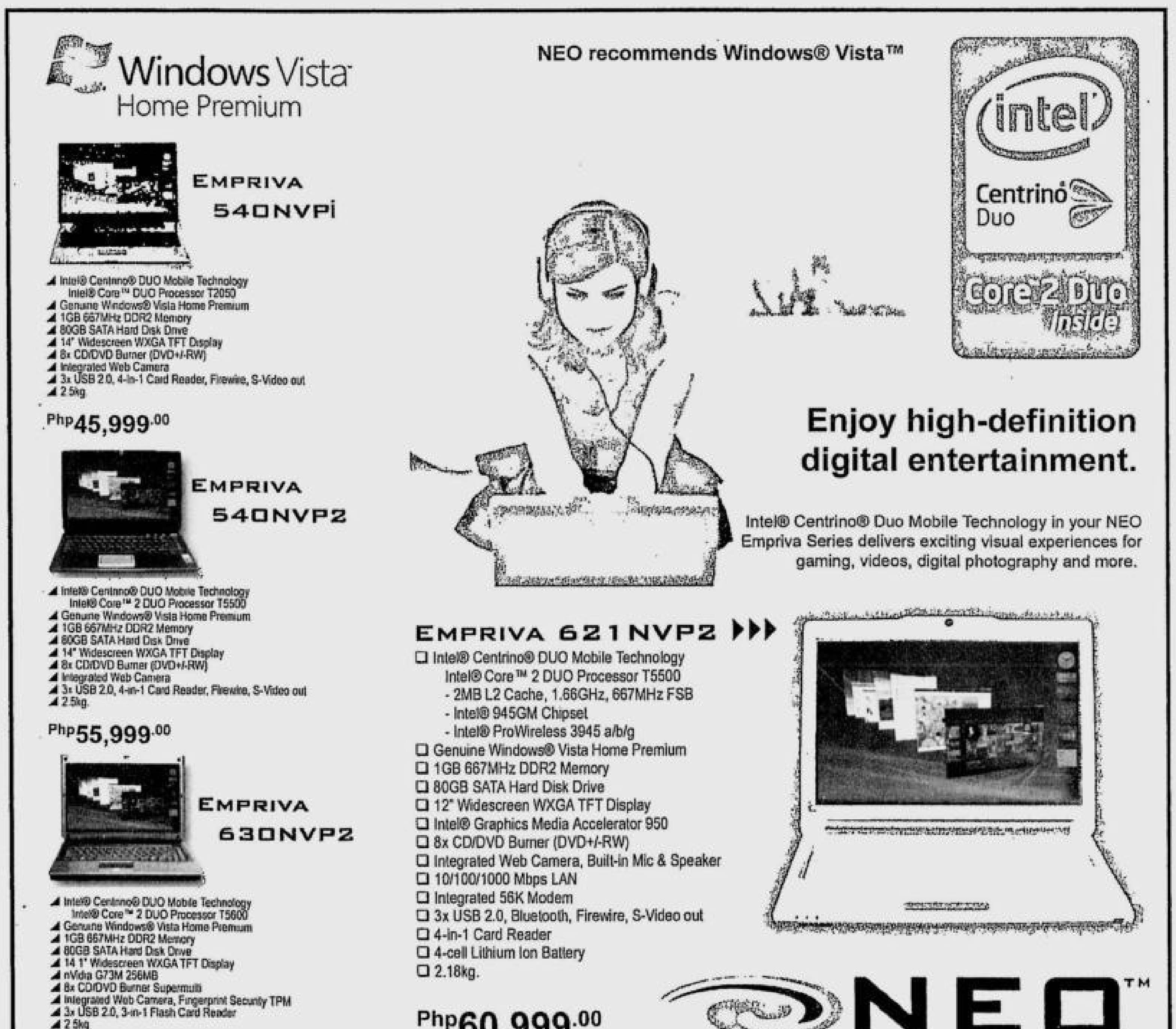

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Must the elderly's problems end at the grave?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR the elderly look great. On paper, that is. But, as the programs are being implemented, the elderly runs into all sorts of problems.

If the elderly is not recorded at the National Statistics Office, he has a big problem proving his date of birth. Normally, you have to submit affidavits from two persons who were old enough when you were born. But, in my case, at 80 going 81, all those who knew when I was born are now dead. My baptismal record is also gone. Fortunately, I have my passport.

The excellent Expanded Senior Citizens Law, as authored by Parañaque Rep. Ed Zialcita, broadened the coverage of the discount program. The law also did away with the Senior Citizens ID as the sole proof of age. A passport or a driver's license is supposed to be equally acceptable.

But getting your 20 percent discount on your purchase is always a big battle. Every establishment I go into will not give the discount unless I can present a Senior Citizens ID. I am told that the Bureau of Internal Revenue will look for the Senior Citizens ID when the establishment applies for the tax break. Somebody has to straighten out the BIR on this matter.

I usually get my discount anyway by throwing a tantrum and threatening to file a complaint.

Even the application of the 12-percent value-added tax had to be clarified. Recently, the BIR finally ruled that the computation should be, as follows: if the gross price is P100, the 20 percent discount is applied first, then the VAT is computed on the P80 net price, bringing the final price to P89.60.

Vice President Noli de Castro has joined the fray. He confirmed that the discount should be given even if the elderly wanted to charge the transaction against his credit card. But mighty Mercury Drug insists that no discount will be given except on cash transactions. This is why I no longer buy my medicines from Mercury Drug.

At the Social Security System, some retirees have problems with their pensions. Of all people, my good friend, Amading Cabaero, the founding national president of the Philippine Association of Retired Persons, discovered the other week that the SSS had been shortchanging him since his pension started some 15 years ago. PARP's national executive board will take up the case formally with the SSS. Amading's case is not uncommon.

At the Government Service Insurance System, the problems of the elderly seem to be worse. Two weeks ago, I took my friend Magdalena Villanueva to the GSIS. She had come all the way from the United States to make a personal appearance to prove that she was still alive and kicking at age 84. A certificate from the Philippine Consulate used to be acceptable. But not anymore.

At the pensions department, I counted at least 50 other elderly pensioners making their personal appearances to prove they were still alive, just like Magdalena.

I appreciate the need of the GSIS to make sure that 84-year-old pensioners are still alive. After all, according to the mortality table used by Insular Life, for every 1,000 people, all age 84, about 62 of them will not reach their 85th birthday. Will Magdalena then make a personal appearance at the GSIS every year from here on?

But Magdalena's problem was more than proving that she was still alive. She claimed that she had not received her pension since 2003. The GSIS told her the checks for 2003-2004 were issued, released and apparently cashed. Problems like these prompted the GSIS to embark on the check-less e-card system.

The bank is now reconciling the account. Magdalena hopes the reconciliation will not outlive her.

The pensions for 2005-2006 were indeed unpaid. To withdraw the money, Magdalena had to apply for an e-card. One week later, she went back to the GSIS to get her e-card. But, it was not working. Twice, the e-card had to be replaced. Finally, the third e-card was a success. But, although she was told that her e-card was already activated, Magdalena has to wait for three more weeks before she can take out her money. Is this delay due to an administrative or a cash flow problem? Or, maybe both?

It looks like the e-card system is not working well, so far. Maybe, the GSIS should adopt the successful card-less and check-less SSS system.

Must the problems of the elderly end at the grave?

ccip CHAMBER OF COSMETICS INDUSTRY OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC.

'Champion the Cause thru Information and Productivity'

The Chamber of Cosmetics Industry of the Philippines (CCIP) will hold its 1st General Membership Meeting this year and its 33rd Induction of Officers today, February 12, 6:00 p.m., Ballroom A, Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. The Honorable Dr. Francisco T. Duque III, Secretary of Health, will be CCIP's Guest of Honor and inducting officer.

Established in 1974, the Chamber of Cosmetics Industry of the Philippines, Inc. was formed as the leading cosmetic industry organization with the objective of advocating the values of forging unity among the players of the cosmetic industry in order to promote their collective interests.

As an industry organization, CCIP was able to achieve several milestones such as reduction of government-imposed sales tax on cosmetic products, reclassification of cosmetics as non-luxury items, three-year conversion lead time for the metrication / standardization of package sizes for cosmetic products, formulation of the Cosmetics Regulation Bill when the government finally took notice of the industry's plight and lowered the tariff on raw materials from 50% to 20%. These are just some of the accomplishments of the chamber in the last 33 years.

The theme of the CCIP this year is 'Champion the Cause thru Information and Productivity' and is very appropriate in uplifting the cause of the chamber to further improve the quality and standards of cosmetic products in the Philippines especially with the ASEAN Cosmetics Harmonization taking place soon. The following officers and board members who will be inducted to office by the Honorable Secretary Dr. Francisco T. Duque III, will help advance the cause of the CCIP :

Messages

I convey my warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Chamber of Cosmetics Industry of the Philippines (CCIP) on the holding of this year's First General Membership Meeting and Induction of Officers and Board of Directors.

May this occasion, with the theme, "Champion the Cause through Information and Productivity" be the inspiration for working towards raising the standards in pursuit of quality and excellence in the cosmetics industry.

Let us strengthen our efforts and renew our commitment in propelling the Philippine cosmetics industry to become a pivotal force in the country's growth and development.

Congratulations and mabuhay kayong lahat!

FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, M.D., MSc.
Secretary of Health

In behalf of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD), I wish to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the officers and members of the Chamber of Cosmetic Industry of the Philippines on the occasion of its 1st General Membership Meeting which will be held on 12 February 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila.

The CCIP has long been a vital partner of BFAD in its efforts to fully implement the ASEAN Harmonized Regulatory Scheme by 2008. We have been together in taking steps to implement the requirements and procedures of the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive.

The Bureau understands that rising up to the challenge of "Harmonization" is not an easy task. But we should look at it as an opportunity for us to grow and to prove our worth not only in the Philippine market but also in the global arena.

We greatly appreciate your efforts and we assure you that we are with you in fulfilling your vision to *"become a pivotal force in the country's economic growth and development."*

Again, our warmest congratulations, and keep up the good work!

PROF. LETICIA-BARBARA B. GUTIERREZ, MS
Director

MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

My fellow members of the Chamber of Cosmetics Industry of the Philippines, it is my distinct honor to have been chosen to lead us in this most special time. The former leaders of our organization have accomplished so much for the cosmetics industry. I am therefore challenged to carry on what they have begun and lead us to the next level. As we prepare to work alongside our ASEAN counterparts our Board leads with our strong battle cry to "CHAMPION THE CAUSE THROUGH INFORMATION AND PRODUCTIVITY".

Together with this mission is our main objective to be the lead organization in the Philippines as far as cosmetics is concerned. Throughout this year we will arm ourselves with projects and programs geared toward the betterment of the entire industry.

Let us set the bar high so that we may be prepared not only to partner with other ASEAN organizations but more so equally compete with them. Our local cosmetics companies deserve our most dedicated representation. It should be our organization's thrust to put the interest of Filipino companies at our highest priority.

I appeal to everyone to put into heart our organization's mission. In our individual capacities let us challenge ourselves to reach higher, strive harder and become better. I am confident that with God's grace and with everyone's support for the leadership of CCIP we will accomplish our goals.

Congratulations everyone Thank you.

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Jessin R Soriano
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Tess Keil
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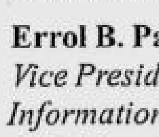
Carmencita D. Abelardo,
Vice President - Finance

Atty. Leah L. Sy,
Legal Counsel

Atty. Lorna E. Filipino,
Legal Counsel for Regulatory Affairs

CCIP Board of Directors



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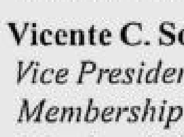

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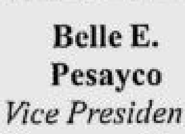

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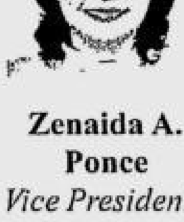

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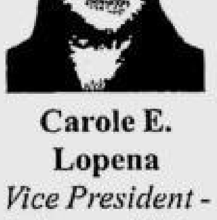
Danilo A. Macatangay
Vice President - Government Affairs Committee



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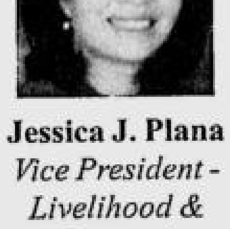

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Vice President - Livelihood & Outreach Committee

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Dispute impedes dev't of RP property in Japan

Infighting between members of group that won the bid said to cause delay

By Michelle V. Remo

ALTHOUGH THE BIDDING FOR THE PHILIPpine government's property in the district of Nampeidai in Tokyo has been concluded more than a year ago, the development of the 2,489-square-meter land is being hampered by a dispute between members of the consortium who won the bid.

Finance Undersecretary Gaudencio Mendoza Jr. told reporters that the Philippine government could not determine to whom it should award the notice to proceed (with the property development) because members of the consortium are quarreling over the right to represent the Nagayama-Taisei consortium.

The Nagayama-Taisei consortium, a Japanese real estate developer, won the bidding for the 50-year lease of the Nampeidai property. Nagayama won over its only competitor Urban Development Corp.

Under the contract between Nagayama and the Philippine government, the latter would lease the property to the consortium for 50 years. Within the period, the developer should construct on the property a 1.7-billion-yen building, 22-percent of which should be reserved for the exclusive use of the Philippine government.

The Philippine government intends to use the space as a consulate office. The property already has a four-story building on it, but officials said that it has already deteriorated, becoming an eyesore.

The Nampeidai property was vacated after the Philippine embassy in Japan transferred to the Roponggi district, which is also in Tokyo, during the time of President Joseph Estrada.

Mendoza said representatives from the Philippines' Department of Finance (DOF) would meet with officials of the Nagayama-Taisei consortium this week to thresh out the problem and pave the way for the development of the property.

The finance official noted that the consortium has already paid in full the bid price of 480 million yen late last year, almost a year after the bidding was conducted in December 2005. The delay in the payment of the bid was also due to another dispute in the consortium as to who should sign the contract on behalf of the Nagayama-Taisei consortium.

Should nothing come out of this week's meeting, the DOF officials would then have to seek advise from the Japanese government.

A worst-case scenario would be having to rebid the property. But Mendoza said the consortium is not expected to allow a rebidding to happen given that the bid price has already been paid in full.

The Nampeidai property is just one of the Philippine government's properties in Japan.

Two other properties, located in the districts of Naniwacho and Obanoyama in Kobe, were likewise leased for 50 years to Japanese property developer Berg Corp.

The two Kobe properties were supposed to be sold. But the government later withdrew the plan to sell amid stiff opposition from critics who said the properties, considered as national patrimony, should not be sold.

Banks' capital adequacy ratio fell to 18.33% in June 2006

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE BANKING SYSTEM'S CAPItal adequacy ratio (CAR) fell to 18.33 percent on a consolidated basis at end-June last year from 19.4 percent at end-March, way above the minimum required ratio of 10 percent.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported on Friday that on a non-consolidated basis, or accounting for the parent bank alone, the banking system's CAR also eased to 17.01 percent from 18.03 percent over the comparative period.

CAR is a risk-sensitive measure of a bank's solvency, relating capital to risk assets which are weighted according to riskiness.

"The decrease in CARs may be attributed to the combined effect of the decline in qualifying capital and slight increase in risk-weighted assets," the BSP reported.

Qualifying capital in the banking system went down by 4.89 percent from P431.4 billion to P410.3 billion on a solo basis.

On a consolidated basis, it declined by 2.34 percent from P495.8 billion to P484.2 billion.

This decline in qualifying capital was accompanied by a slight expansion in risk-weighted assets, which rose by 0.81 percent to P2.41 trillion on a solo basis, and by 3.39 percent to P2.64 trillion over the comparative quarter.

The CARs of universal and commercial banks alone went down to 18.53 percent from 19.62 percent on a consolidated basis and to 17.02 percent from 18.05 percent on a solo basis.

The thrift banking system's CAR, on the other hand, stood at 17.62 percent both on solo and consolidated basis versus the 18.83 percent ratio of the previous quarter.

The ratio of the rural/cooperative banking system also went down to 15.41 percent from 15.81 percent of the previous quarter.

Starting this July 1, the BSP will switch to the Basel 2-based capital adequacy framework. The new framework shall maintain the minimum CAR requirement of 10 percent, but will tighten the capital charges against actual credit exposure, market risk and operational risk.

Basel 2 revises Basel 1 to make regulatory capital requirements more risk-sensitive. The revised framework now imposes specific capital charges for credit derivatives, securitization exposure, counter-party risk in the trading book as well as operational risk.

The BSP expects the local banking system's CAR to slip by about 3.5 percentage points with the mandatory shift to the stiffer requirements of the Basel 2 accord.

But BSP deputy governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. had said the BSP would like to believe that most banks would comply with the Basel 2 requirements.

"We have built-in penalties, but on top of that, for example, if you want to do complex products, you can't do that if your systems are not strong," Espenilla said.

"If you're not actively watching your risk-based capital, your CAR will be hit, and if you have CAR problems, you'll fall under the PCA (preemptive correction action). When you're in the PCA, there's denial of business expansion plans or buying of new branches. So it's not so much the monetary penalties but the limited opportunities for a bank. So really, it's a mean incentive for them to comply," he added.

KPMG

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Laurito E. Serrano, CPA*
Pacifico M. Castañeda, CPA
Sharon Gabionza-Dayoan, CPA

and the appointments as Principals of

Emmanuel P. Bonoan
Attorney-at-law
Herminigildo G. Murakami
Attorney-at-law

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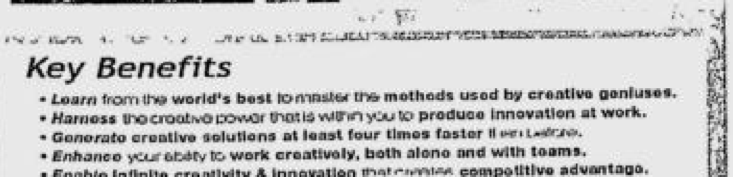

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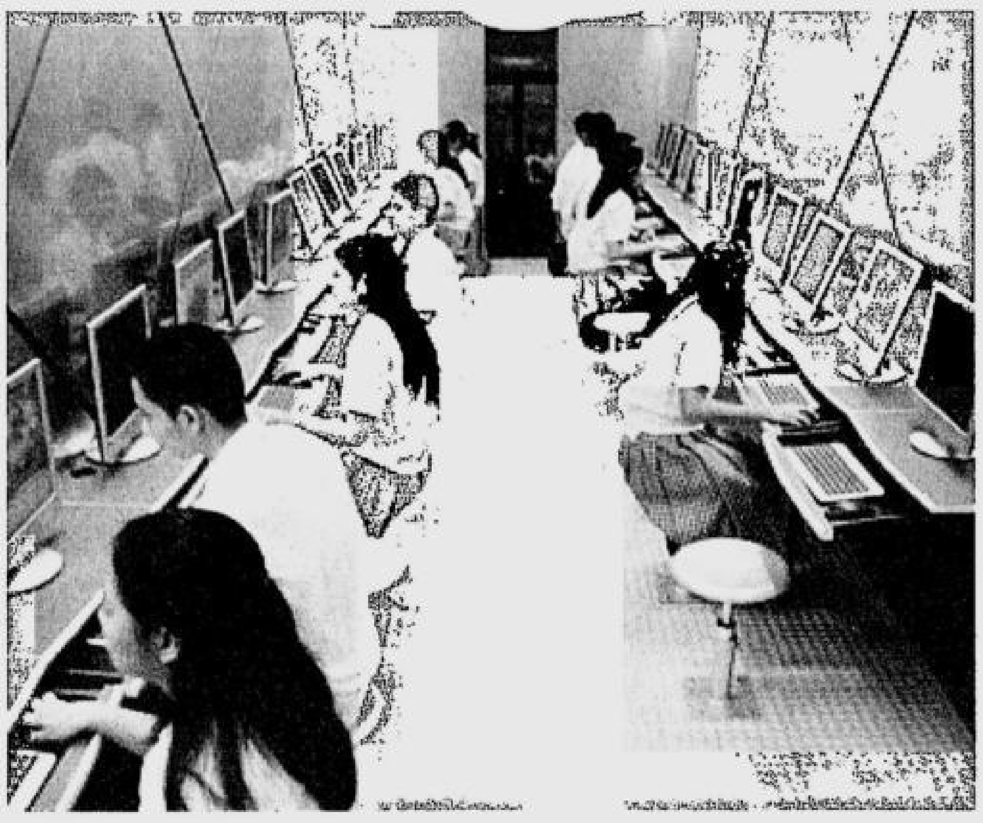
C&P Homes seeks creditors' OK for debt swap



STI'S MOBILE SCHOOL
Jose Rizal High School students try the computers in the STI Mobile School, a computer laboratory in a bus recently launched by information communication technology provider STI. The STI Mobile School will be deployed in 64 different public high schools in Luzon to benefit about 12,000 students. This project is aimed at improving the ICT literacy in the country.

Scheme to involve $133.5 million worth of floating-rate notes issued in the 1990s

By Daxim L. Lucas

STILL TRYING TO RECOVER FROM the financial crisis 10 years ago, property developer C&P Homes Inc. said over the weekend it would swap bonds issued to creditors in the 1990s with a combination of new debt and equity securities.

The scheme, which will effectively refinance old debts, will allow the listed firm to benefit from the prevailing low interest rate regime as well as the ongoing boom in the real estate industry.

In a statement to the stock exchange, C&P Homes said its board of directors had approved a plan to reacquire $133.47 million in floating rate notes issued by its C&P Homes International Ltd. subsidiary in 1997.

These floating rate notes are fully guaranteed by the parent firm, which fell on hard times in the wake of the East Asian financial crisis and is currently undergoing an SEC-supervised restructuring program.

Under the plan, C&P will offer to acquire these outstanding bonds in exchange for a combination of new US dollar-denominated long-term notes with a 15-year maturity and new shares of stock in the company.

"Holders of [floating rate notes] who will not accept the said offer will be repaid in cash on a discounted basis," the company told the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

"The plan is expected to be approved by floating rate note holders representing more than 90 percent of the total [securities], for implementation by the first half of March [2007]," it added.

"The transaction will drastically reduce our debt and significantly strengthen our balance sheet," C&P Homes chief financial officer Estrellita Tan said in her statement. "This, in turn, will give C&P the flexibility to aggressively pursue various strategic options in the near- to medium-term."

As of its 2005 financial statements, the firm was struggling under P13.2 billion worth of assorted debt and liabilities, although this represented an improvement over the P16.3 billion it reported in the previous year.

C&P Homes president and CEO Maribeth Tolentino said the finalization of the debt rationalization plan "is a significant milestone in the history of [the] company."

"With our debt problems completely addressed, we are now poised to undertake strategic options that will benefit our various stakeholders, including the general public," she added.

At the PSE, C&P Homes' stock price closed on Friday at P2.26 apiece, up from the previous day's level of P2 per share.

Oleochemicals exports seen increasing by 111% in '07

By Ronnel W. Domingo

EXPORTS OF OLEOCHEMICALS ARE EXpected to swell by 111.3 percent this year, as the industry expands its production capacity for these coconut-based products, which include biodiesel.

Oleochemicals are used in the production of detergents, cosmetics and paint. They are also used as base or additives for food, medicines, plastic, rubber, textiles and even automotive fuel.

According to the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, exports this year were estimated to reach 300,000 metric tons in copra terms from 142,000 MT in 2006.

Also, Ucap said domestic demand for oleochemicals was expected to shoot up by 28.7 percent this year with the signing into law of the Biofuels Act.

The umbrella group said local consumption was estimated to reach 642,000 metric tons in copra terms on account of the law that mandated the use of biodiesel.

If domestic use of biodiesel would not increase as projected, the bulk of the industry's biodiesel output would be exported and add up to the projected volume for oleochemicals exports, Ucap said.

The increase in production capacity was foreseen as officials of Chemrez Technologies Inc. said late last year that the company was considering expanding its biodiesel production capacity once the Biofuels Act took effect.

The company's existing facilities can produce 75,000 MT a year but a new plant that could add 120,000 MT yearly and would cost at least P2 billion is in the pipeline.

Chemrez officials said capacity expansion would depend on how fast demand for its product would pick up in both the foreign and domestic markets once the mandated blending of biodiesel with petro-diesel was implemented.

Also, the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) Oil Mills Group has mentioned plans to go into biodiesel production in an effort to produce higher value-added products that will generate better revenue.

Danilo M. Coronacion, CIIF Oil Mills president and chief executive officer, had said the company could proceed if demand and prices for biodiesel was "good."

Coronacion said the company had enough capability to go biodiesel with its abundant coconut oil feedstock, being the country's biggest coconut oil producer.

New team takes over local KPMG subsidiary

A NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM HAS BOUGHT into the former Laya Mananghaya & Co.—the local partner of international accounting firm KPMG—to revive the group's flagging fortunes in the lucrative auditing industry.

Its name has also been changed to Manabat Sanagustin & Co. after its former chair and managing partner Mario T. Managhaya retired recently, according to a statement released by the company.

The new partners and management team consist of chair and CEO Roberto G. Manabat, vice chair and chief operating officer Emmanuel P. Bonoan, financial advisory service vice chair Laurito E. Serrano and chief financial officer Pacifico M. Castañeda.

Other members of the group are audit partner Sharon G. Dayoan, tax and corporate services principal Herminigildo G. Murakami, while existing partner Jorge Ma. S. Sanagustin assumed the role of vice chair for audit risk and advisory services.

Prior to the entry of the new group, KPMG had already initiated proceedings with the audit firm after receiving a string of complaints, capped by the decision of Chinatrust (Phils.) Commercial Bank Corp. to drop Laya Mananghaya as its auditor for supposed "insufficient grasp of new banking standards."

Sources familiar with developments in the firm said KPMG agreed to grant the new management a review period to prove its ability to turn the firm around.

The foreign auditor was allegedly unhappy about the corporate governance practices of its local unit under its former owners and has underscored this as a requirement for the new group.

Manabat Sanagustin is headed by Roberto G. Manabat who served as the first general accountant of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and was a former partner and audit group head of SGV & Co. (SGV).

He is active in various standard-setting and regulatory bodies, such as the Financial Reporting Standards Council, Auditing and Assurance Standards Council. He is also a trustee of the Institute of Corporate Directors.

The new roster also includes former Finance undersecretary Emmanuel P. Bonoan who headed its revenue operations group, responsible for formulating tax policy and had operational oversight over the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

He is best known for his stint as the head of the DOF's anti-corruption arm, the Revenue Integrity Protection Service, and its Run After Tax Evaders program.

In a statement, Manabat assured the firm's clients that its most urgent priority was to "ensure that the firm will uphold the strictest quality standards and on-time delivery in all its existing and future engagements."

Daxim L. Lucas

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Philam Plans again overall leader in SEC report

PHILAM PLANS INC, THE LEADER IN providing pension, education and life/memorial plans in the country, continues to be the most trusted in its industry today, based on current standings from the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

In its latest sales report, SEC cited Philam Plans as the overall leader in the entire industry for the period of January to November 2006, with total sales of over P3.21 billion and an industry market share of over 18 percent. The same report also showed that Philam Plans led the whole industry the entire month of November 2006, generating over P477 million in total sales and over 28 percent total industry market share. Also on the same month, Philam Plans reached the number one spot in the Pension Plans category with total sales of over P2.49 billion and a market share of 22 percent.

"We continue to be very pleased with our overall results and with how our company's unified efforts have brought these about, despite a very challenging and difficult year for the entire industry in 2006," said Philam Plans president and CEO Jack I. Howell. "We are confident that this trend is a sign of better things to come as we constantly find new ways to serve the financial needs of the Filipino family."

The previous SEC Report also reflected favorable data on Philam Plans' overall industry standing for the period of January to October 2006, where the company led all other pre-need players with total sales of over P2.74 billion and a market share of over 17 percent.

Since the middle of 2006, Philam Plans has directed strategic steps to boost the company's financial capabilities to continue to be the leader in its business for all categories.

To date, Philam Plans Inc holds the largest, fastest growing and most liquid trust fund with P27.7 billion, the majority of which are secured in cash or near-cash equivalent such as government securities. It is also the biggest capitalized pre-need company, standing at P700 million in paid-up capital, which is seven times larger than the minimum SEC requirement. The company currently has over 500,000 plans in force.

Philam Plans is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company (Philamlife), the country's largest and most diversified insurance company and a member company of the American International Group Inc (AIG), the leading international insurance and financial services organization with operations in more than 130 countries and jurisdictions.

COCA COLA'S KINETI-KIDS LAUNCHED

In the last quarter of 2004, The Coca Cola Company signed a tripartite memorandum of agreement with the Department of Education and the Food and Nutrition and Research Institute under the Department of Science and Technology for the implementation of 'Kineti-Kids: Its Fun to be Fit!'-a fitness program for school children. The primary objective of the program is the promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle among school children. The pilot phase covered four schools in Metro Manila—J. Lukban Elementary School, P. Gomez Elementary School, Malate Catholic School, and St. Anthony School. The program is a scientifically designed nutrition education and physical activity program for elementary school children riding on the current PE, Health and Science subjects. And after the highly successful two-year pilot; the Coca-Cola Company takes Kineti-Kids to the next level by expanding the program to more schools nationwide. This comprehensive school program will be implemented in public and private schools in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. 'The success of the pilot phase validated our belief in the project. Today, we seal our confidence as we embark on reaching more school children all over the country,' Jose Bayani Baylon, vice president for public affairs and communications, said. Kineti-Kids is part of The Coca-Cola Company's 'Healthy and Active Lifestyle' (HAL) program, which seeks to promote positive change in the lives of Filipinos through the promotion of the values of a daily balanced diet, proper hydration and physical activity. The program supports the 'Adopt a School' program of the DepEd. Shown at launch were (from left) Dr. Mario Caparanza, FNRI Director, Baylon, DepEd Usec. Vilma L. Labrador, HAL the Kineti-Kids mascot, and DepEd Usec Ramon Bacani.

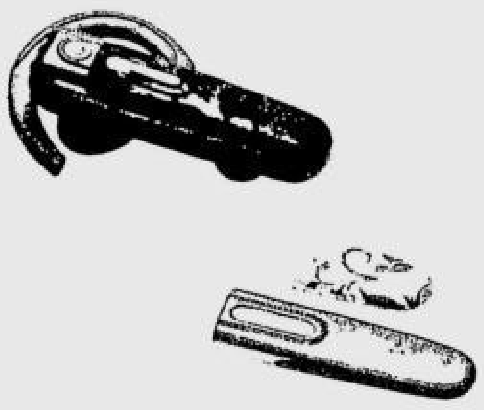
Sony Ericsson Bluetooth accessories for Walkman phones

HERE'S GOOD NEWS TO WALKman phone lovers. Sony Ericsson has released two Bluetooth-enabled music accessories.

The Music Receiver MBR-100 is a device that plugs into the car stereo or hi-fi stereo and then streams the music from one's Bluetooth-enabled phone to the speakers. Once the phone is paired with the MBR-100, just walk into its range and an automatic invitation comes in on the phone screen to play the music. The phone can even be used as a remote control, letting one play, pause or skip to the next track. The MBR-100 comes with a 3.5-mm input music jack cable, an RCA music cable and a standard charger.

On the fashion side, Sony Ericsson has announced the Bluetooth Headset HBH-PV705 Style Edition. This elegant, discreet and compact Bluetooth headset can be hung around the neck through a beautiful necklace strap or be kept in a soft closeable pouch. The kit comes with a detailed attachable jewelry that can be clipped to the necklace strap or pouch for added style. Three different panels are supplied for personalization: black with an embossed floral pattern, white with purple floral detail and an elegant purple.

The HBH-PV705 Style Edition is designed for the best sound experience with the microphone placed close to the mouth. The high-performance ear speaker does not cover the ear canal, so the user can talk to people without having to take the headset off. At a mere 14 grams and with a soft ear hook, it boasts of 12 hours talk and 300 hours stand by time.



MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL EMPLOYEES ASSIST 'REMING' VICTIMS

Sanggunian Council, the employee-management council of Makati Shangri-La Hotel, recently initiated a fund-raiser among its members to support the efforts of Harvest Association Inc, a charity association that matches donors and beneficiaries. Angelo 'Butch' Superio, chair of Sanggunian Council, (3rd from left) hands over a check for P50,000 to Fr. Arnold Eramiz, president of Harvest Association. Also shown are (from left), Marilou F. Vicencio, Harvest executive director, Cory Altamirano, HR manager of Makati Shangri-La Hotel, and lawyer Federico Noel, Harvest board member and corporate legal counsel of the Kuok Group's Edsa Properties Holdings Inc. The P50,000 donation will form part of the proposed Harvest Village that Harvest, in partnership with Gawad Kalinga, will build in Legaspi, Albay, for victims of typhoon Reming.

Christopher is running!

MULTI-AWARDED MOVIE AND TELEVISION actor Christopher de Leon, one of the country's most bankable and durable entertainment icons, has confirmed that he is running-to keep himself physically fit and enable him to withstand the rigors of showbiz life.

Christopher de Leon also admits to being a fitness buff. He has his own gym at home where he works out regularly, a testament to his discipline and hard work that is very evident in his good looks despite more than three decades in the bruising, highly competitive entertainment world.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Christopher de Leon was the first choice when Abbott Nutrition International began looking for a celebrity endorser for Ensure, its premium nutrition formula. Ensure is the undisputed market leader worldwide that is clinically proven and number one doctor recommended, and Abbott wants to make sure the endorser is an undisputed industry leader as well.

Christopher de Leon is the perfect embodiment of Ensure. He is well known, is highly respected not only by the public but his peers as well, and has proven his worth in his chosen career as evidenced by the numerous acting awards he has won. In addition to a well balanced diet, exercise and stress management, he helps keep his heart healthy and protected by drinking a glass of Ensure everyday," said Maricar Yabyabin, Abbott Nutrition's marketing manager.

Experts have long determined that exercise and proper nutrition must go hand in hand to achieve optimum health. Thus, Christopher de Leon never had second thoughts about endorsing Ensure.

"Ensure complements me very well. I exercise, run, go to the gym regularly. I also make it a point to get all the proper nutrients I need to remain healthy, active, and feeling good inside and out. And drinking Ensure is one of the best ways to get all the nutrition I need everyday," the multi-awarded actor said.

"Ensure provides complete and balanced nutrition for healthy individuals who lead active lifestyles and who want to make sure that they get the best nutrition supplement available. I also put a premium on my heart, and Ensure is again the perfect way to a healthy heart," he added.

Ensure has a Unique Heart Defense System that helps control blood pressure and helps prevent cholesterol build-up. It is rich in soluble fiber, 28 vitamins and minerals, and a scientifically designed, thoroughly tested antioxidant system that has been identified as beneficial in promoting cardiovascular health.

It meets the American Heart Association and National Cholesterol Education Program Guidelines on the low cholesterol level, low sodium and zero trans fat, according to Dr. Bienvenido Tianco, medical director of Abbott Nutrition International.

Tianco said Ensure is so complete that it can be a person's sole source of nutrition and that, in fact, it is the number one nutritional formula recommended by doctors. Ensure is also served to hospital patients either as meal replacement or as part of their meals.

"If it is good enough for people whose health is compromised, it is definitely good for us who want to stay active and healthy, even during our late adult years," Tianco said. "And you will be pleasantly surprised how delicious both the vanilla and chocolate flavors of Ensure are."

More information about Ensure may be obtained from Abbott's Nutrition Hotline at 689-0444 (Metro Manila) or its national toll-free number, 1-800-108-433-427. The hotlines are open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and are manned by registered nutritionists/dietitians who are licensed to provide information and counseling on proper nutrition.

Aspac dinner-dance celebrates 20th year

THE ATENEO SCHOOLS PARENTS COUNCIL (ASpac), the official association of all parents of college students in the Loyola Schools of the Ateneo de Manila University, celebrates its 20th anniversary with a Thanksgiving Mass at 6 p.m., Feb. 17 at the Camp Crame Multi-Purpose Center, Quezon City. Immediately following the mass will be a grand reunion and dinner-dance at 7 p.m. Expected to attend the event are Aspac members and their families as well as its officers, board directors and committee chairs, the Aspac scholars and the larger community of the Loyola Schools over the past 20 years since it was founded by Fr. Raul J. Bonoan SJ in 1987, as announced by Aspac president Josie Perez-Ang and special projects chair Maiette M. Zee. Aspac has been at the forefront of a continuing scholarship fund drive that has produced such outstanding graduates as class 2001 valedictorian Roselle Ambubuyog, a blind student who excelled in mathematics and is now taking a masteral actuarial course. Also to be launched at the dinner reunion is the Aspac commemorative coffee table book which will document the story of parent volunteerism at the Ateneo. Parents of present and former college students of the Ateneo Loyola Schools are invited to call the Aspac office at 426-5691 or 426-6001 local 5190, or 921-6834/ 924-8339.

LECTURE ON ALLERGY

Dr. Emil Sarmiento, a visiting director and senior partner of the Allergic Disease and Asthma Center in South Carolina, is given a plaque of appreciation by Dr. Madeleine Sumpaico, chair of the Allergy and Immunology department, UP-PGH College of Medicine, after delivering a lecture and update on allergy and asthma at the UP-PGH recently. Also shown are Dr. Marysia Recto (3rd from left), allergist, and members of the UP-PGH faculty.

GlobeSolutions turns BOC into SMS-enabled enterprise

GLOBESOLUTIONS IS THE NEW PARTNER OF the Bureau of Customs in delivering responsive and efficient services to the government agency's customers. At the 105th anniversary of BOC, GlobeSolutions launched the TxtConnect and GCash service for the agency. Globe Telecom and Innove Communications are the first to provide such services to the BOC.

"Imagine transacting business with the Bureau of Customs with no need for face-to-face transactions. No need to go to the BOC. No need to go to the bank. The BOC's e2m (electronic-to-mobile) is the movement from Internet-based computer systems to cellphone-based devices for use in BOC transactions-filing, track and trace, cargo status, notification, payment, release instruction, etc. With a cellphone, importers, exporters, brokers and BOC personnel can completely process import and export shipments via their cellphones," Alexander M. Arevalo, BOC Deputy Commissioner for Management Information Systems and Technology Group, said.

The partnership between BOC and GlobeSolutions, together with GCash, is part of the agency's e2m project. A SMS-based system will be developed for the BOC to help reduce the cost and time of doing business and face-to-face transactions with the government agency.

GOVERNANC
RFID
COMMISSIONER

Shown are (from left) Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, BOC Commissioner Napoleon Morales and Enterprise Business Group Sales Head Aries Sayson.

Pasig Catholic College 94th foundation week

PASIG CATHOLIC COLLEGE IN PASIG CITY WILL HOLD ITS 94th year foundation week from Feb. 12 to 17. The week-long celebration will be culminated in by a grand alumni homecoming on Feb. 17 hosted by high school batch 1982. All alumni of the Catholic school here and abroad are invited to join this big event to reminisce the good ol' "Kumbento" days. For particulars, call the alumni office at 641-7544 local 163 (Rosario Caguingin) or Raoul Gonzales (0926-7399020), Patrick Ordonez (0917-8316907).

Korea connects to the future

BEGINNING THE 1950'S, SOUTH KOREA'S RISE to the top has been swift and unrelenting. After the devastating 1997 Asian financial crisis, South Korea bounced back rapidly with a goal to become one of the world's most technologically advanced countries in the world.

In the past few years they have made great strides in achieving that goal. They are leading the charge in mobile phones, electronic and car manufacturing technology.

Korea might not have the reputation Japan enjoys as a cutting-edge society yet, but one only has to see as far as their burgeoning film industry as proof of Korea's emergence in the big leagues. Many of Korea's films have made Hollywood, and the rest of the world, sit up and take notice. Most recently the 2001 smash hit "My Sassy Girl" starring Korean superstars Tae-hyun Cha and Ji-hyun Jun is reportedly being re-made in Hollywood and will star Elisha Cuthbert of the television show "24". The Western world is now following in the footsteps of this 48 million strong nation. This is also true when it comes to Korea's place as a major player in the field of innovation and technology.

One of the reasons for this country's success are the Koreans themselves. They are fiercely patriotic and take pride in their nation's achievements. During the financial crisis in the 1990's, many Koreans gave up their personal wealth to the government voluntarily to help the nation out of a sense of patriotic duty.

Koreans value their nation just as much as they value their own families. Even though South Korea is now a leader in new technology, the people still cherish age-old customs and traditions that include their unique cuisine and colorful history.

In 2003, Korea's government decided to implement a groundbreaking plan to expand its internet broadband infrastructure to boost education by using the world wide web for research and teaching. About 70 percent of the population are online and 11 million have broadband access. Korea's government aims to have every citizen hooked up to a super-fast connection. Korea's resolve to be respected name in technology in the world can be seen by their dedication to improving their automobile manufacturing. To date, Korea is one of the major contenders in the global market. They are the sixth largest car exporters in the world despite a relatively late start in the industry.

SsangYong Motor Company (SYMC) is one of Korea's major automobile manufacturers. Already in the business for five decades, the company has carved a niche in manufacturing premium sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs). In early 1990's, SsangYong furthered its investment in producing premier SUVs and MPVs by partnering with Germany's Mercedes-Benz AG and acquiring the company's European technology, management and distribution strategy which has made it a major contributor to Korea's place in the automobile industry in the global markets.

SsangYong has grown its business worldwide, including the Philippines with dealership that was started in November 2002 via Wheels Inc along E. Rodriguez Ave. In May 2005, exclusive dealership of Ssangyong SUVs and MPVs was sealed with the opening of SsangYong Auto Philippines Corp (Sapco). At present, the brands Rexton (the complete SUV), Stavic and Kyron are available at SsangYong's (SAPCO) branches in E. Rodriguez and Quezon Ave., Makati and soon in Davao and Diosdado Macagapagal Ave. in Manila Bay.

In spite of advances in technology and the arts, there seem to be no slowing down for Korea, and SsangYong in building and maintaining a respectable name in the world.

INQUIRER SUPPORTS DLSU 'GREENERATIONS'

The De La Salle University (DLSU) Batch of 1982, together with co-celebrant batches, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary on March 3, at the DLSU football field at 5 p.m. Dubbed as 'Greenerations', this year's homecoming will surely be a breakthrough from their past homecomings as they invite other DLSU campuses to join them in the celebration to create a truly 'One La Salle' community. Shown in photo, (seated from left) are: Jong Arcano (Inquirer Golf editor), Jocelle Salonga (Inquirer AVP-marketing), Chona Gana and Henry Atayde (DLSU Homecoming co-chairpersons) with other DLSU Batch '82 officers standing from left: Dave de Leon, Ferdie Reyes, Dany Uson, Carol Evidente-Villavicencio, Jojo Buenaventura, Bonny Dimayuga during the MOA signing held at the Inquirer Boardroom last Feb. 6. For more details, please call Honors Inc - The Reunion Managers at 437-7090, fax 911-4045 or e-mail honors_inc@yahoo.com.

UNITING TOGETHER TO FIGHT HEPA B

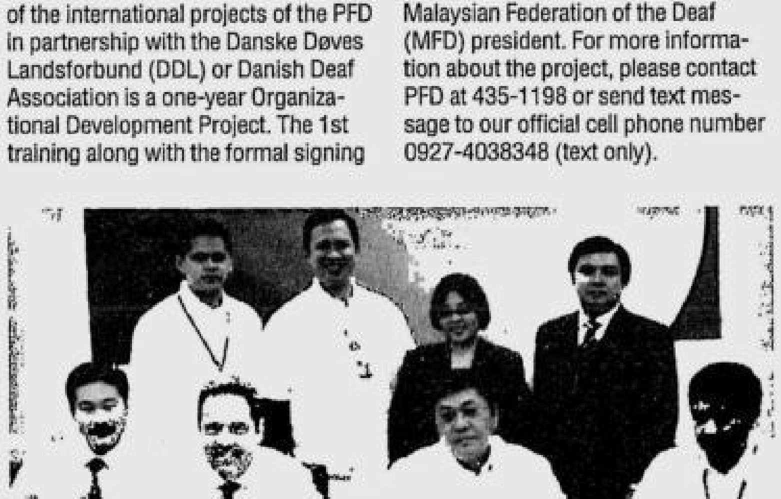
The country's top medical practitioners in the fields of gastroenterology and infectious diseases as well as medical experts from the Department of Health (DOH) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recently gathered to give the media updates on Hepatitis B in line with the upcoming 3rd Hepatitis B Summit to be held on Feb. 22 at the New World Hotel. Present during the event were: Dr. Jaime Ignacio (Philippine Society of Gastroenterology); Dr. Christia Padolina (Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society); Dr. Lulu Bravo (National Institute of Health); Dr. Erlinda Valdellon (Hepatology Society of the Philippines); Jena Fetalino (medical observer); May Bautista (GlaxoSmithKline); Dr. Lyndon Lee Suy, DOH's program manager for Emerging and Re-Emerging Diseases; Dr. Jose Sollano, Jr., (Asia Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver). For more information on the 3rd Hepatitis B Summit, call the Hepa B Hotlines: (02) 893-9355; 0915-2942255; 0918-6929742; or e-mail hepab_summit@yahoo.com. Registration is free.

SM HYPERMARKET SHOP & WIN GRAND DRAW

SM Hypermarket, the country's biggest and most reliable supermarket chain, recently held its much anticipated Shop & Win promo grand draw at Taste Asia, Mall of Asia. Over 30 individuals have so far won as much as P1 million in the promo participated in by shoppers of SM Bicutan, SM Clark, SM Mall of Asia, SM Marilao, SM Molino, SM North Edsa, SM Pasig, SM Sucat, and SM Valenzuela. More than just a simple raffle for loyal shoppers and patrons, SM Hypermarket's Shop & Win promo is SM's way of making a positive impact in the lives of the public through financial rewards. Past winners have used their cash prizes to set up small businesses, pay for their children's tuition, and augment household expenses. In photo are (from left) Josie Gan, AVP for marketing and promotions, Dawn Zulueta and Robert Kwee, EVP.

PFD, DDL SIGN AGREEMENT

The Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD) is a non-profit national federation of 17 deaf member organizations from all over the country. It is affiliated with the World Federation of the Deaf, a member of the United Nations. One of the international projects of the PFD in partnership with the Danske Døves Landsforbund (DDL) or Danish Deaf Association is a one-year Organizational Development Project. The 1st training along with the formal signing of agreement between PFD and DDL, was held last Nov. 9 to 12, at the Riverview Resort in Calamba Laguna, and facilitated by the international deaf trainers Asger Bergmann, DDL president and Mohammad Sazali, Malaysian Federation of the Deaf (MFD) president. For more information about the project, please contact PFD at 435-1198 or send text message to our official cell phone number 0927-4038348 (text only).



STRADCOM TIES UP WITH GLOBAL 360

Stradcom Corp recently inked a technical partnership with US-based Global 360 Inc for the acquisition of the Global 360 Business Process Management Solutions (BPMS). The BPMS will provide Stradcom the flexibility to quickly adapt to changing market needs through real-time analysis and metrics thereby ensuring business objectives and customer commitments effectively. Shown during the contract signing are (standing, from left) Arnold Ocampo, Stradcom AVP for finance and administration; Ramon Reyes, Stradcom VP for operations; lawyer Liezel Chico, Stradcom legal manager; lawyer Eric Pilapil, Stradcom VP for legal and corporate affairs; (seated, from left) Joe Lim, Global 360, head - technical consultancy; Lloyd Parata, Global 360, Asean and South Asia Regions; Cezar Quiambao, Stradcom president; Miguel Dalawampu, Stradcom VP for project oversight and technical development.

Clips

Panasonic 2008 scholars

THE PANASONIC GROUP OF COMPANIES IN THE Philippines, the country's leading manufacturer of appliances and electronic products, is now accepting applicants for the 2008 Panasonic Scholarship Program. The program is open to all medically fit, Filipino citizens not older than 28 as of April 1, 2007, and a university graduate who must have completed at least 15 years of formal study. Applications will be accepted up to March 31. For more details, interested parties can visit Panasonic's website at http://www.panasonic.com.ph/aboutus/sc/sch.htm or email at pmpc_scholarship@ph.panasonic.com. Applicants can also call at (02)635-2260 local 2820 for inquiries.

Tour Baguio City with Engrande

EXPERIENCE BAGUIO'S MOST-ANTICIPATED FLOWER FESTIVAL, THE Panagbenga 2007. Engrande Travel Phils. will be having a Baguio City Flower Festival Tour on Feb. 23-25. Don't miss the Baguio Street Dancing Parade, Float Parade, and fireworks display at the Burnham Park. The trip will also include guided tour at the Mines View Park, Baguio Cathedral, Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto, and at the Tam-Awan Village-Igorot Village Museum. Shopping will be a breeze because guests will be billeted at the Hotel Veniz near the market. The tour also includes daily breakfast, souvenirs, and hot drinks on board. For more information, call Engrande Travel Phils at 851-0361, 851-1549, mobile: 0921-9796165 or e-mail them at engrandephils@yahoo.com.ph. Their office is located at Buenavista Bldg. 2, Quirino Ave., Baclaran, Parañaque City.

PSLIS, ISIP seminar-workshop

THE PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF LIBRARIANS AND INFORMATION SPECIALISTS (PSLIS) in cooperation with the Integrated Society of Information Professionals (Isip) will hold a seminar-workshop on "Trends and Strategies in Indexing, Cataloging and Abstracting" at the Cooyeesan Plaza Hotel, Naguilian Rd cor Asin Rd, Baguio City on Feb. 22-24. For reservation call: Lyn (02)724-1994; Dorie (02)527-8351; Medy (02)897-8808 local 330, 0917-8664357; 0919-5180128; e-mail: isipp_pslis@yahoo.com, rgregorio@inquirer.com.ph.

DLSUMC to mark silver jubilee

THE DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER (DLSUMC), THE HOSPITAL arm of the De La Salle-Health Sciences Campus, will mark its 25th year of founding this 2007 with a launching event to be held from Feb. 12 to 16. With the theme "Kalingang DLSUMC: 25 taong serbisyong de kalidad", the celebration will be highlighted by the launching of the new DLSUMC Imaging and Diagnostic Center on Feb. 15. The celebration will kick off with a motorcade around Cavite on Feb. 12. During the week, the hospital will conduct a blood letting activity, celebrate Heart Month, and recognize HMO partners. Also, silver jubilee awards for loyalty and service will be conferred on hospital personnel who have served the hospital for 25 years. Other activities include an exhibit, an ati-atihan showdown, residents' nights, and a talent extravaganza.

'Balik USTE... Sandaang Saya!!!'

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH YEAR OF FOUNDATION OF THE FACULTY OF Engineering of the University of Santo Tomas, the UST Engineering Alumni Association Inc (USTEAAI) is organizing a Grand Centennial Alumni Homecoming which will take place at the Le Pavillon, Metrobank Avenue, Metropolitan Park, Roxas Blvd. corner Edsa, Pasay City on Feb. 17, at 6 p.m. The theme for this event is "Balik USTE... Sandaang Saya!!!", and it is expected to attract at least 1,000 Thomasian engineers both here and abroad. Thomasian engineers may call up the Faculty of Engineering 741-4041 or Beth Wu of the USTEEAI Secretariat, 406-1611 loc. 8320 for tickets to the event.

UP Prep Class '62 to hold reunion

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES PREPARATORY SCHOOL CLASS '62 will hold a Grand Sapphire Reunion from Feb. 17 to 24. The week-long celebrations kick off on Feb. 17, with a Welcome Dinner to be hosted by Flor Gozon Tarriela at her residence, featuring a live band playing nostalgic 60's music. The festivities will culminate on Feb. 24 with a Closing Dinner to be hosted by Delfin Lazaro at the 25th floor of Tower I, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Participants and guests are requested to come in sapphire blue attire (smart casual) for this occasion. For reservations and further inquiries, contact: Ed Elegado, chair of the reunion executive committee, at tel. no. (02)850-4660, cell no. (0918)903-2337; Jose Sugui at (0917)539-2114; Lorna Chua at (0917)892-4612; Edna Ledesma at (0917) 375-8054; Lenny Carillo at (0917) 856-6326.

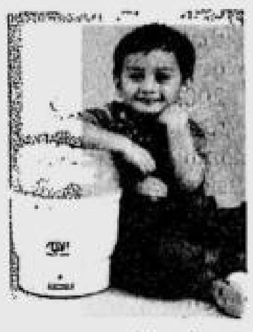
MFI accepts applicants for scholarship

MFI TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE (FORMERLY MERALCO FOUNDATION Institute) is in need of 150 high school graduates who will pass the requirements for scholarship in the first year during school year 2007-2008. Open to applicants for full or partial scholarship, the school offers the three-year Industrial Technician Program (ITP) with courses in electrical, electronics, instrumentation, tool and die technology. MFI will also accept 40 applicants for the partial scholarship in the two-year IT (Information Technology). All these courses are designed to develop highly skilled industrial technicians who can be depended on in the workplace. Requirement for submission for evaluation: Photocopy of the Secondary Report Card (2nd grading period); photocopy of the latest income tax return (ITR) of parents or guardian; (if parents are not working, certification of tax exemption from BIR); two recommendation letters from the principal and one from the guidance counselor of both with school dry seal; and 2 pieces of 2 x 2 picture. Acceptance of applicants is until March 30, at the MFI Building (beside the Medical City Hospital), Ortigas Ave., Pasig City. For further inquiries regarding the program, call 632-0756 to 67 local 283 or visit the website: www.org.ph.

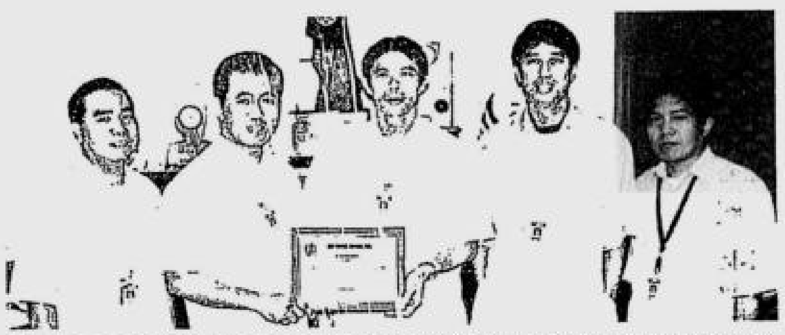
JRU active in community development

JOSE RIZAL UNIVERSITY (JRU), THE UNIVERSITY THAT CARES ABOUT GOOD education, recognizes that in order for an educational institution to successfully provide good education, different means must be employed to ensure holistic development amongst the students and the community. Like the national hero to whom the school was named after, JRU believes that providing a good education and forging well-rounded individuals inevitably leads to social reform. JRU also supports the Local Government Units' aim to foster wider participation of people, including Non-Government Organizations and private institutions, to pursue local development. Consequently, JRU's holistic approach incorporates social responsibility efforts to serve as a catalyst for greater change. JRU believes that student and staff exposure to these activities extends their education for JRU is a steadfast proponent of quality service not only to its students but also to the broader community. To know more about JRU and its programs, log on to www.jru.edu.

FILIPINO TYKE WINS AVENT BABY PHOTO CONTEST



Avent, the world's leading infant products brand, recently concluded the 2006 Avent Regional Baby Photo Contest, naming three-year-old Filipino Dennis Angelo Cresencio Solano as the grand prize winner. The contest drew thousands of entries from countries in the South East Asian Region comprising of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Submitted photos should show babies from 0 to 36 months of age with their favorite Avent baby products in tow. Landing a spot as one of the three finalists in the nationwide Philippine search, Dennis's photo – which showed a smiling Dennis posing with his Avent Express Sterilizer -- was eventually awarded the contest's top prize. Avent is available at leading department stores nationwide. To know more about Avent, visit www.avent.com.



UCPB RECEIVES AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FROM BAP

The Bankers Association of the Philippines' (BAP) Credit Bureau Inc conferred an Award of Excellence on UCPB recently in recognition of the bank's 'outstanding performance in the Loandex Information System for calendar year 2006.' The award was received by the members of the UCPB Credit Appraisal and Investigation Department (CAID), shown in photo is the CAID Loandex team members. They are from left: credit investigator Reynaldo Santos, vice president and CAID head Oscar Gumabay, section head M2 Raymond Moncada and credit investigators Romano Ilog and Emmanuel Guiral.

Product FILES

Photoline opens at SM Bicutan

PHOTOLINE RECENTLY OPENED its new branch at SM Bicutan. Photoline's latest branch is located at the upper ground floor of Building B beside the Hypermarket entrance. Photoline services range from digital printing and studio shots to the latest digital cameras and accessories. Professional photographers can avail of their special wholesale printing rates by inquiring at hotline 0917-5384420.

Savor the new Mr. Chips Pinoy Spaghetti

KIDS AND KIDS AT HEART CAN NOW ENJOY their favorite pasta flavor in a snack, with new Mr. Chips Pinoy Spaghetti. This crunchy delight made of high grade corn chips has the deliciously sweet and zesty taste of spaghetti that Pinoy kids have come to love. Youngsters will only be too happy to dig into a bag of this novel, irresistible flavor. A product of Jack 'n Jill, the all time favorite snack brand of Filipinos, Mr. Chips Pinoy Spaghetti can be enjoyed in any situation.

Paradizoo Theme Farm now open

PARADIZOO THEME FARM AT Panungyan, Mendez, Cavite is a nature destination for people in search of something different and interesting to do. Besides the floral and vegetable exhibits are organic farm products, a butterfly garden, honey bee farm, the pet cemetery, farm animal showcases, landscaping, flower arrangement and backyard farming. The farm is a 10 hectare rolling terrain land envisioned to be an integrated self-sustaining farm. For details call: 899-9819, 899-9824.

Fish & Co opens at the Mall of Asia

FISH & CO, THE BISTRO GROUP'S YOUNGEST addition to their stable of successful concept restaurants like TGI Friday's, Italianni's and Outback, is set to open its third outlet at the Mall of Asia complex a day before Valentine's day, on Feb. 13. One of the trendy restaurants that now face the bay well-known for its famed sunset, Fish & Co has found no less than the perfect spot to serve wonderfully appetizing and lusciously filling seafood wonders. Frequented by personalities and celebrities of all ages, sizes, shapes and orientation, Fish & Co now brings its delectable array of seafood in a pan to the Manila Bay area's movers and shakers and lovers of the edible treasures of the sea.

Dynamite Strawberry Choco Variant

DYNAMITE STRAWBERRY CHOCO CANDY, IS A delightful combination of the sweet, rich flavor of fresh strawberries and the unmistakable goodness of creamy chocolate. Dynamite Strawberry Choco's hard outer core is laced with a strawberry flavor that provides a refreshing tingle in the mouth. The Dynamite experience kicks up a notch with the pillow-soft choco-filled center. Now available in supermarkets, groceries, and sari-sari stores nationwide.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

'You'll Love This' in Ministop

WINNING THAT PERFECT DATE FOR you and your sweetheart has never been this easy. By simply buying at Ministop, couples have the chance to win a romantic trip, hotel stay, wellness treat, or entertainment prizes from Ministop's "You'll Love This!" (Love Month Raffle) Promo".

For a minimum P60 single-receipt purchase of participating products, you get a chance to win one of four Love Packages that will surely make your partner fall head over heels in love with you all over again.

Be one of five lucky pairs to win Love Package One: roundtrip tickets for two to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, courtesy of Cebu Pacific. You could also be one of 10 couples to win Love Package Two: full hotel accommodations for an overnight stay with breakfast at the luxurious Crowne Plaza Manila. There will be 20 winners of Love Package Three: P2,000 gift certificates to the Suriya Spa at the Holiday Inn Galleria Manila. What's more, Love Package Four offers 25 winners with two movie tickets each at Robinsons Movie World.

Don't pass this chance to go on the date of a lifetime, because this offer is only from Feb. 5 to March 4. So, drop by your nearest Ministop store and you might be able to surprise your special someone by saying, "You'll love this!"

JARDINE DISTRIBUTION INC REACHES OUT TO BICOL

KABISIG SA PAG

True to its vision of 'Partnering the Filipino Farmers', Jardine Distribution Inc (Jardine Distribution) recently held Crop 'Recovery' seminars in the Guinobatan and Polangui towns in Bicol. These are two farming areas that were severely damaged by two super typhoons last December. Aside from teaching the farmers new technological inputs in farming, Jardine Distribution also donated complete Crop Protection Packages consisting of insecticides, herbicides, molluscicides and fungicides to each of the attendees. Jardine Distribution is hopeful that the donations will help the farmers get back again with their livelihood. Shown are the attendees and Jardine staff handing out the donation to one of the farmers.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Board of Trustees of the Bataan Polytechnic State College, City of Balanga, Bataan formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the BATAAN POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE is NOW OPEN.

The minimum qualifications are:

- Must be a Filipino citizen;
- Preferably a holder of a Doctoral Degree;
- Preferably not more than sixty (60) years old at the time of application;
- With recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe or industry;
- With at least five (5) years of managerial/administrative experience;
- Must be morally upright;
- Has not been convicted by final judgment of any crime involving moral turpitude.

The applicants should submit a formal application letter together with the following:

- Detailed Curriculum Vitae with recent picture (2 x 2) and certified supporting documents
- Proposed Statement of Vision, Mission, Thrusts and Programs for BPSC
- NSO authenticated birth certificate
- National Bureau of Investigation clearance
- Clearance from Regional Trial Court and Provincial Prosecutor's Office
- Ombudsman clearance for those who are already or have been in the government service
- Clearance from Civil Service Commission and present employer
- Clearance from last two (2) previous employers, as maybe applicable
- Result of neuro-psychiatric examination conducted by any government physician or any accredited health institution (in a sealed envelope)
- Medical Certificate/Clearance from a government physician
- Letter authorizing the Search Committee to validate the submitted documents

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit eight (8) sets of their formal application and certified documents on or before February 28, 2007 to:

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
Commission on Higher Education
c/o **DR. AMELIA A. BIGLETE**
Chairman of the Search Committee for BPSC Presidency
5/F DAP Bldg., San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 633-2713 / Fax No. (02) 635-5829

Note: There is a pending Senate Bill 2457 regarding the conversion of BPSC into a state university.

(PDI—Jan. 28, 2007)

SBFI awards 15 scholarship grants

SECURITY BANK FOUNDATION INC (SBFI) awarded a total of 15 new scholarship grants to deserving Business and Accountancy students for the school year. The University of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas and Centro Escolar University were each awarded five scholarship grants worth P55,000 per year for each scholar to subsidize expenses for their tuition, transportation and book allowance.

Snacks and refreshments were served after the awarding of certificates by the board of trustees, represented by SBFI chair Rafael F. Simpao Jr. Also present at the simple rites were SBFI president Anastasia Y. Dy, scholarship committee chair Evylene C. Sison, and members of the board of trustees, Melissa R. Aquino and Joselito E. Mape.

The scholars from the respective universities include the following students: UP-Efrellene Galula, Hannah May Daño, Lester Enterina, Iris Gem Li and Monica Mei Perez; UST-Lance Frederick Li, Junelle Reyes, Maris-Zol Pepito, Edward Jayson Valencia and Jacqueline-Sue Villanueva; CEU-Jeffrey Magpantay, Ma. Eliza Mercado, Angelita Pineda, Ma. Fe Roanne Resurreccion and Jackquelyn Calago.

Security Bank Corp, through its social development arm, the Security Bank Foundation Inc continues to provide financial assistance and opportunities to high-potential young achievers to acquire the best possible education and the necessary skills that will equip them to be responsible business leaders and productive members of society.

Shown, seated, are Mape, Aquino, Simpao Jr, Dy, and Sison with school representatives (standing, from left) Josephine Rellis (secretary, UST-College of Accountancy), Dr. Helena Ma. Cabrera (dean, UST-College of Commerce), Dr. Erlinda Echanis (dean, UP-College of Business Administration); (from right) lawyer Jessica Los Baños (director, UP-CBA Undergraduate Program) and Leny Dellosa (head, CEU-School of Accountancy, Management and Technology Office Administration).

Arellano High '48 launches Golden Heart Awards

IN APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION OF the unsolicited support and generosity of its members, Class '48 April of the Arellano Manila (Manila North) High School will launch its first Golden Heart Awards at its luncheon meeting on Feb. 18 at the Hernandez Building, 154 Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City.

Recipients of the award are: Francisco V. Galvez Jr, Dalisay F. Domingo, Ruben D. Bunag and retired banker Leonardo de Guzman.

Class '48 April enjoins its batchmates to bring their spouses for a fun-filled afternoon of fellowship, ballroom dancing, videoke singing, parlor games and prizes galore.

Interested parties may call any of the following: Bienvenido M. Pangilinan, president; Taling Javier (419-5392), vice president; Ludy Espinosa-Tesalona (801-9774), secretary; Virgie Iligan-Hernandez, treasurer; Vic Serrano (906-3670), auditor; Virgie Samson-Carino, business manager; and Gonzalo "Elvis" Trinidad, PRO. Class advisers are lawyer Martin B. Isidro and engineer Pastor B. Esguerra Jr.

Eng Bee Tin's Chinese New Year

THE CHINESE START THEIR YEAR IN FEBRUary. Anywhere in the world where there are Chinese people, there is a Chinese New Year celebration, and two weeks before the celebration, Manila's Chinatown is in a festive mood.

Decorated with red attractive banners and catchy lights, Chinatown is all prepared to start the Year of the Pig with much gusto! Among them is Eng Bee Tin owner Gerry Chua who wants to start the year with a bang!

"The Chinese New Year is one of those events the Chinese community won't surely miss." As always, he is practicing his mission in line with the celebration, which is "to do good deeds." More than his bestseller hopia and tikoy, Eng Bee Tin is one of the major sponsors of this year's week-long celebration in Chinatown.

According to Chua, a lot of exciting activities are in store for this year's Chinese New Year celebration. The first night on Feb. 12 will showcase fireworks display on the busy street of Ongpin. A Chinese New Year celebration would not be complete without fireworks. There are many beliefs about why fireworks are used. One is that the noise wakes up the dragon that will fly across the sky to bring the spring rain for the crops. Another belief is that the noise of the fireworks is supposed to scare away all evil spirits and misfortunes, preventing them from coming into the New Year.

A modern dance competition will be highlighted on Feb. 13. On Valentine's night, be captured as the Chinese community serenades you with the best of Mandarin love songs. On the 15th, Chinese girls will impress you with their wit and charm as they vie for the title for this year's Little Miss China.

The Chinese culture will be emphasized on Feb. 16 and 17 with Chinese cultural shows and parade of floats. The traditional dragon dance will be part of the closing salvo. The celebration won't be complete without the dragon dance. It is another popular symbol for Chinese New Year. It is a symbol of strength, goodness, and good luck, and supernatural forces.

Chinese merrymaking won't be complete without food. Eng Bee Tin offers a new line of tikoy products which will surely fit your healthy lifestyle. Indulge in the classic taste of tikoy, this time without the guilt of sugar with Tikoy Lite. Feast on your favorite flavor, ube, not only in hopia, but with Ube Tikoy Lite, also, a sugar free delicacy.

Have a truly happy and prosperous Chinese New Year with Tikoy Lite and Ube Tikoy Lite! Take home a handful of other Chinese delicacies from Eng Bee Tin's store nearest you. Eng Bee Tin products are locally available in various supermarkets, groceries, and restaurants nationwide. The company also exports products to customers in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Sealed applications for eligibility and bid documents for the supply and delivery of election forms, supplies and paraphernalia for use in the May 14, 2007 elections shall be received at the COMELEC Session Hall, 8th Floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila, on February 25, 27 and 28, 2007 at 10:00 A.M., at which place, date and time, said sealed bids shall be opened in the presence of the members of the COMELEC Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), representatives of the COMELEC, Commission on Audit, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, the participating bidders and the public, with an approved budget of Eight Hundred Sixty Million Two Hundred Ninety Two Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty One and 02/100 (Php 860,292,751.02), charged against the appropriations for the May 14, 2007 National and Local Elections.

A pre-bid conference shall be held on February 9, 2007, 10:00 A.M. at the COMELEC Session Hall, 8th Floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila.

Bid documents and specifications may be obtained during regular office hours, beginning February 5, 2007, from the Property Division upon payment with the COMELEC Cash Division, of the non-refundable prescribed fee.

Bids shall be accompanied by a Bidder's Bond equivalent to one per centum (1%) of the offer, bid, tender or quotation, in the form of cash or manager's/cashier's check payable to the "Commission on Elections."

Delivery schedules are specified in the prescribed bidder's Tender.

The COMELEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formal defect contained therein, and accept the lowest calculated responsive bid that is most advantageous to the COMELEC. Likewise, COMELEC reserves the right to review the qualifications of the bidders after the bidding and before the contract is executed. Should such review uncover any change in the situation of the bidder to materially downgrade the substance of such statements, the COMELEC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice without any obligation whatsoever on the part of the COMELEC for any expense or loss that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of its bid.

February 2, 2007.

(Sgd.) JOSE M. TOLENTINO, JR.
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – February 12, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office - XI
R.C. Reyes Bldg. Quimpo Blvd., Davao City
Tel. Nos. 298-3000 to 3004 • Telefax: (082) 296-2265
www.philhealth.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, **PhilHealth Regional Office XI - Davao** (PRO XI-Davao) wishes to invite bidders for the Hiring of **SECURITY SERVICES:**

15 Security Guards to be assigned in PhilHealth Regional Office XI-Davao City

12 Security Guards to be assigned in the PhilHealth Services Offices (3 SG for each PhilHealth Service Office) Digos City, Davao del Sur; Tagum City, Davao del Norte; Nabunturan, Compostela Valley Province and Mati, Davao Oriental.

The Government of the Philippines through PhilHealth had provided funds for which this invitation is issued. The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be bid is **Php 3,697,391.90.**

All interested parties are invited for the **Pre-Bid Conference** at the PhilHealth Regional Office XI-Davao Conference Room on **February 11, 2007 at 10:00 A.M.**

The bid documents shall be available at the General Services Section, Administration Division through Mr. Patrick Angelo L. Uy, Chairperson, PRO XI BAC Secretariat, starting **February 7, 2007 to March 5, 2007, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM,** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Php 7,395.00.**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished bid documents (1) eligibility requirements, (2) technical proposal, and (3) financial proposal in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid boxes located at the **Administration Division, PhilHealth Regional Office XI - Davao, Reyes Bldg., Quimpo Boulevard, Matina, Davao City.** Deadline for submission and receipt of bids shall be on **March 9, 2007 at 11:00 A.M.** The official time clock shall be the bundy clock located at the ground floor. Any bid submitted after the cut-off time will not be accepted. **Opening of bids will follow at 1:00 P.M.** at the same venue. Any bidder who comes late will not be entertained.

The BAC shall determine if each prospective bidder is eligible to participate in the bidding by examining the completeness of each prospective bidder's eligibility requirements or statements against a checklist of requirements, using the **non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria.**

The Bid Security shall be in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than a percentage of the approved budget for the contract in the following forms:

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid	Amount of Bid Security
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)	Php36,973.92
Bank Guarantee	One & a half percent (1½%)	Php 55,460.88

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at telephone nos. (082) 296-2265, (082) 299-2075 and (082) 299-3731.

We look forward to your participation in this worthwhile endeavor.

PhilHealth reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PhilHealth further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **RAUL M. ODUCAYEN**
Chairperson, PRO XI-Davao, BAC

(PDI – Feb. 5 & 12, 2007)

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PIRA chairman Aglipay at NREA meet

DEVELOPERS OF RETIREMENT VILLAGES and providers of retirement-related business activities will receive a briefing on the package of tax and non-tax incentives that were recently approved for them by the government, during the business meeting of the National Real Estate Association on Feb. 22, 2007 (Thurs.), beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Makati Sports Club, Leviste Street, Makati City.

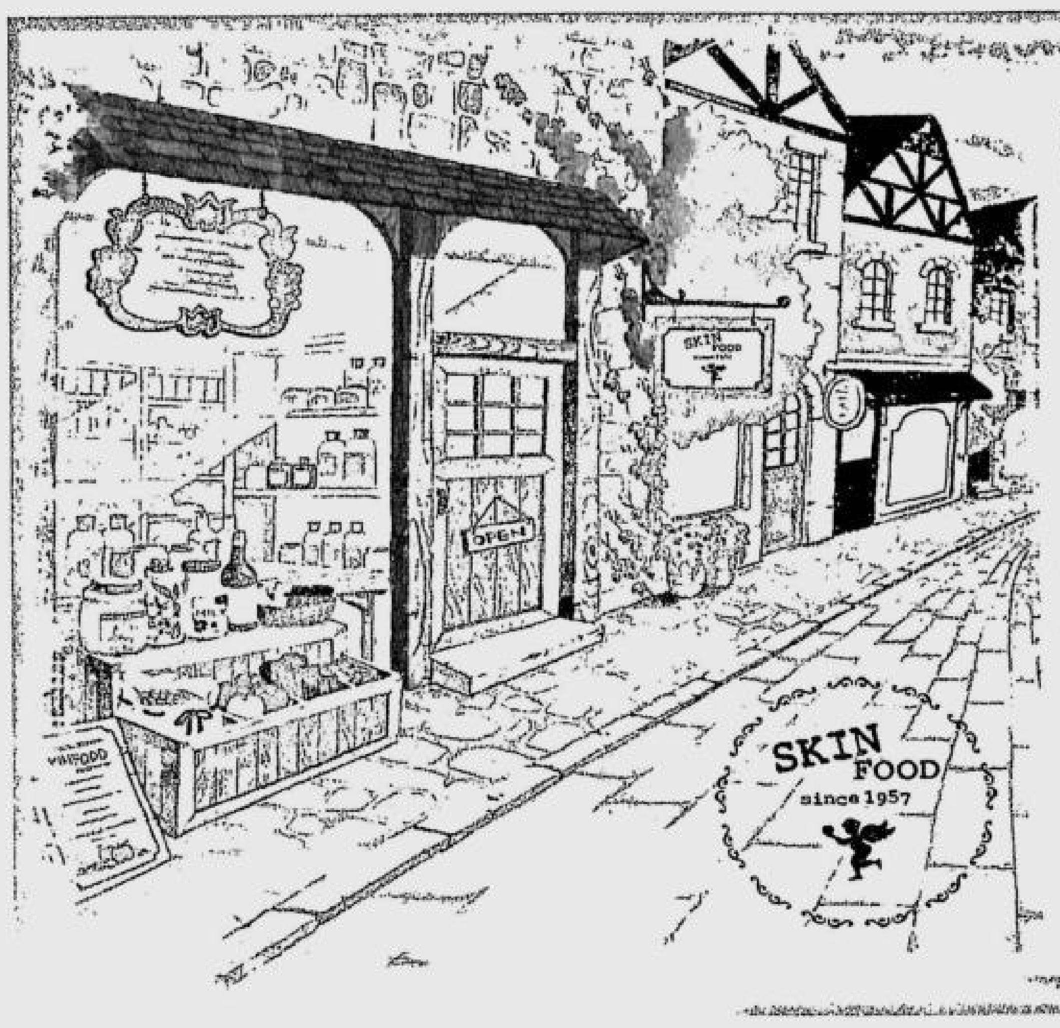
Alejandro S. Mañalac, NREA president and VP-Finance Marissa Del Mar, chair of the affair, announced that retired PNP Director General Edgar B. Aglipay, chairman of the Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA) will be the guest of honor and speaker during NREA's first business meeting for the year.

Assisting in the preparations are Lucia Ferrer, Jesse Rebustillo, Veronica Lim, Yul Malicse, Conrado Maputi, Bing Tayag and the Secretariat.

Non-members may attend by coordinating with the Secretariat at tel. nos. 913-4463 or tel. fax 912-3492.

More Classified Ads:

• ITD-Mega Guru Event	Page B8
• Dinsmor Enterprises	Page B8
• COMELEC	Page B12
• Bataan Polytechnic State College	Page B12
• PhilHealth-Region XI	Page B12



SKIN FOOD, a brand that has been revolutionizing skin care in Korea since 1957 and winning favorable response in highly competitive markets such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand is now in the Philippines.

Be a Skin Food Franchisee

- Turn key operations
- Site sourcing & assessment
- Ready locations for Alabang, Davao & Metro Manila major malls
- Low investment with fast payback

FOR FRANCHISING INQUIRIES, PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTER OF INTENT TO:

Franchise and Business Development Manager
Tel. No. 808-6017 local 258 and 119
Fax No. 808-6017 local 283
E-mail: skinfood.franchising@gmail.com

MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER

Contract Reference Number
Name of the Contract
Location of the Contract
Revised on: July 29, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	**Construction of 25,000 gallons, 17 meters Steel Tower Elevated Water Tank and Deep Well Drilling**
Location	**MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER**
Brief description	Construction of the Steel Tower Elevated Water Tank would include General requirement, which include fabrication works site works, civil works and equipment rental, steel works concrete works & form works Plumbing Works: deep well drilling would be 2 deep well sites which include site works, deep well casing, pumps & appurtenances
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	**Php3,356,294.42**
Contract Duration	**90 days - Civil works**

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Civil Works

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	February 19 - 21, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	February 22 - 23, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 27 to March 01, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	March 5, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 8 - 16, 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference	March 16, 2007
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 30, 2007

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Brgy. # 6 San Julian, Batac, Ilocos Norte, upon their submission of an LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 2,000.00** to the **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier**. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php5,000.00** to the **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier.**

The **Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center** assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **LOUIE A. GUERRERO, M.D., FPCR**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Feb. 5 & 12, 2007)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Privatization and Management Office (PMO), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites Security Agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	**Security Services**
Location	**Various locations in Metro Manila, Luzon & Mindanao**
Approved Budget	**P 3,559,680.00**
Contract Duration	**One Year**
Delivery Period	**April 2007**

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the execution of the project. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Bid Documents will be available starting 6 February 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the 4th Floor PMO-BAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Pesos (P8,900.00) cash.**

The PMO-BAC will conduct its **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested bidders on **19 February 2007 at 10:00 a.m.**, 6th floor Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Deadline for submission of Bids and Eligibility Requirements shall be on 1 March 2007 at 10:00 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by a **Bid Security** in the form of manager's check / cashier's check in the amount of **P35,596.80** or if surety bond in the amount of **P88,992.00** or if bank guarantee in the amount of **P53,395.20. Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Bid Opening shall be on **1 March 2007 at 10:00 a.m.** at the 6th floor Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.

The PMO-BAC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Moreover, the PMO-BAC reserves its right to reject any or all bid proposals, waive any formality in the bid requirements, declare the bidding a failure without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders, or award the contract to the bidder whose offer is the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid, and most advantageous to the Government

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC)
PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE
104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tel. No. 893-7096; 817-8762
Fax No. 893-2290 * Website: www.pmo.gov.ph

Approved by:
(Sgd.) CRISANTA S. LEGASPI
Chairperson, PMO-BAC

(PDI – February 5 & 12, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
National Electrification Administration
Needed Immediately

GENERAL MANAGER

for

QUEZON I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (QUEZELCO I)
Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon

Qualifications:

- 30-50 YEARS OLD
- Male or Female
- Graduate of Business Administration, Engineering (Electrical, Mechanical, ECE), Accounting, Finance, Management or Behavioral Science
- With Master's Degree or Post-Graduate Degree preferred
- Must have at least five (5) years managerial experience in a utility-related business enterprise
- Computer literate
- Must be willing to relocate with his/her family in Quezon.

Starting Salary: P35,000.00

Application forms and additional information may be obtained from the Institutional Development Department, 6th floor, NEA Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline for submission of application form is on 27 February 2007.

(Sgd.) EDITA S. BUENO
Administrator

(PDI – Feb. 11 & 12, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE for PICC PROJECTS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibility and to bid and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below

Project Title	Proposed Design, Construction and One Year Operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant
Scope of Work	Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision, laboratory testing and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed **design, construction and one year operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant** all in accordance with the Terms of Reference and the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	PICC Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget	Twenty Four Million Pesos (P24,000,000.00)
Source of Funding	BSP Corporate Funds
Contract Duration	Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License	Registration Particulars of at least "Medium A" (Building and Industrial Plant and/or Sewerage and Sewage Treatment / Disposal Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience	Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) at least three (3) projects involving **design and construction of an STP facility utilizing the Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) Technology** one of which costs not less than twelve million pesos (P12,000,000.00) In case of a joint venture, submission of a valid joint venture agreement including the special PCAB license is required. The joint venture must have previously completed at least two (2) similar construction projects involving similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	Should be able to submit certicates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects. For those contractors who have previously done/completed BSP project/s, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted
Net Financial Contracting Capacity Or	At least Twenty Four Million Pesos (P24,000,000.00) *computed as 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started)*
Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate	At least Two Million Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,400,000.00)
Letter of Intent (LOI)	
Deadline of Submission	February 16, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	Five Hundred Pesos per set (P500.00/set)
Date of Issuance	January 29 to February 12, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Deadline of Submission	February 16, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Notice of Eligibility/Ineligibility	
Date of Issuance	February 26, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid / Tender Documents Issuance	Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Twelve Thousand Pesos (P12,000.00)
Date of Issuance	February 27 to 28, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	
Date and Time	March 05, 2007/ 10:00 AM
Venue	PDMO Conference Room 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	March 26, 2007 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - Telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor P. Ocampo St., Manila.

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to the deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – Jan. 29 & Feb. 12, 2007)

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Chief Engr	from US$4,950. –	6 mos. Contract
2nd Engr	from US$3,795. –	8 mos. Contract
3rd Engr	from US$2,640. –	10 mos. Contract
Electrician	from US$3,019. –	10 mos. Contract
C/Cook	from US$1,378. – to US$1,486. –	10 mos. Contract
Ck/B (AB/Ck)	from US$1,067. –	10 mos. Contract
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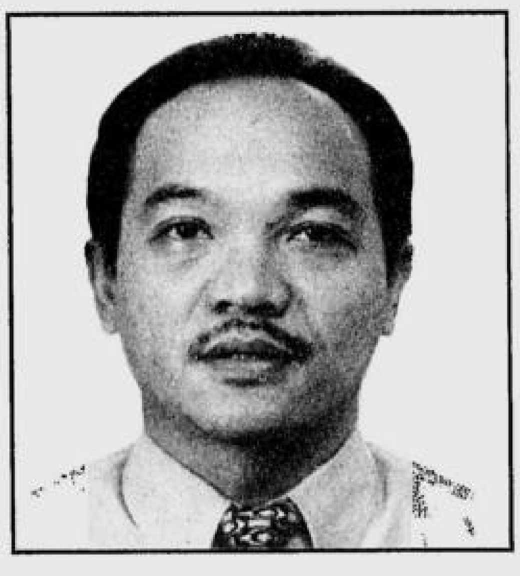
NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



Notice is hereby given that Mr. MENDEL A. NOCHE whose picture appears above is no longer connected with GENCARS, INC. - Isuzu Makati, Batangas, San Pablo, Legaspi and Lemery effective January 26, 2007. Any transaction entered into by the said person will not be honored by the company after the said date.

(PDI - Feb. 5 & 12, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 95-QUEZON CITY

IN THE MATTER OF TESTAMENTARY ESTATE OF THE DECEASE JOSE B. DIMSON,

SP. PROC. NO. Q-06-58529

ROBERT P. GARCIA,
Petitioner.

x--x

ORDER

Notice is hereby given to ROQUETA R. DIMSON and all her children residing at her last known address at No. 10 Magalang Street, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City and JUDITCH JOHNSON and her children residing at her last known address at Washington Drive, Sorsogon City to appear before this Court located at Rm. 202, 2nd Floor, Hall of Justice Building, Quezon City Hall Compound, Quezon City on February 22, 2007 at 8:30 o'clock in the morning and show cause why the petition filed by the petitioner for the allowance of a Holographic Will of deceased Jose B. Dimson dated April 7, 1993 shall not be granted. Otherwise, the Court will allow the petitioner and his counsel to present witnesses in support of the will.

SO ORDERED.

Quezon City, Philippines, January 19, 2007.

(Sgd.) **HENRI JEAN-PAUL B. INTING**
Presiding Judge

(PDI – Feb. 5, 12 & 19, 2007)

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Investments in Davao region down 63% in 2006 to ₱2.4B

DAVAO CITY—INVESTMENTS IN the Davao Region went down 63 percent last year, but the National Economic Development Authority said the decline was no cause for alarm.

In its report covering the region's socioeconomic performance for 2006, Neda said investment commitments registered with the Board of Investments (BOI) only reached a combined P2.4 billion.

Most of the investments in the region last year went to port services, packaging services, fruit processing and plastics manufacturing.

The report also said that foreign direct investments (FDI) reached P302 million during the first semester of 2006.

Total infusion into the agriculture sector reached P250.7 million while the industry sector, particularly manufacturing, got P33.2 million.

Nicasio Angelo Agustin, Neda director for Southern Mindanao, said the investment growth rate came out low last year due to a very high growth rate in 2005.

"The growth in investments in 2005 was abnormally high, that is why, if we compare the growth in 2006 to the previous year, it appeared low. But we can still say there was growth in investments in 2006," Agustin said in a recent briefing.

Agustin said Neda has projected that the region would perform better this year despite the setback suffered by the export sector due to the strengthening of the peso.

Agustin said one of the assumptions for 2007 was that remittances from overseas Filipino workers would remain strong, thus driving growth in real estate and construction.

Agustin said Neda also expected the upcoming elections to boost public spending during the first quarter.

He said Neda was confident that the region would hit its target growth rate of 5.5 percent this year.

"These factors are foreseen to possibly make up for the region's anticipated losses from exports," he said. *Judy Quiros, Inquirer Mindanao*

SMEs seen cashing in on outsourcing trend

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES ARE expected to become significant players in the business process outsourcing business, which industry watchers expect to continue to boom this year.

According to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, a part of the Department of Trade and Industry, local SMEs would get a windfall as global firms outsource more high-value processes like engineering services, research and development and health care.

Trade Assistant Secretary Fe Agoncillo-Reyes, who is also Citem executive director, said SMEs would have the opportunity to cash in on the BPO trend as government and private stakeholders gear up the sector through the promotion of "knowledge process outsourcing" or KPO in the e-Services Philippines (ESP) 2007.

To be held Feb. 15 and 16 at the Shangri-La Edsa Hotel, the conference and exhibition would serve as a platform to encourage more foreign investments into SMEs engaged in information and communication technology-related ventures.

Delegates from the United States, Europe, Japan and India are expected to visit ESP 2007 to attend business matching sessions, conduct due diligence on the new capabilities of Philippine BPO providers and join the CEO Forum.

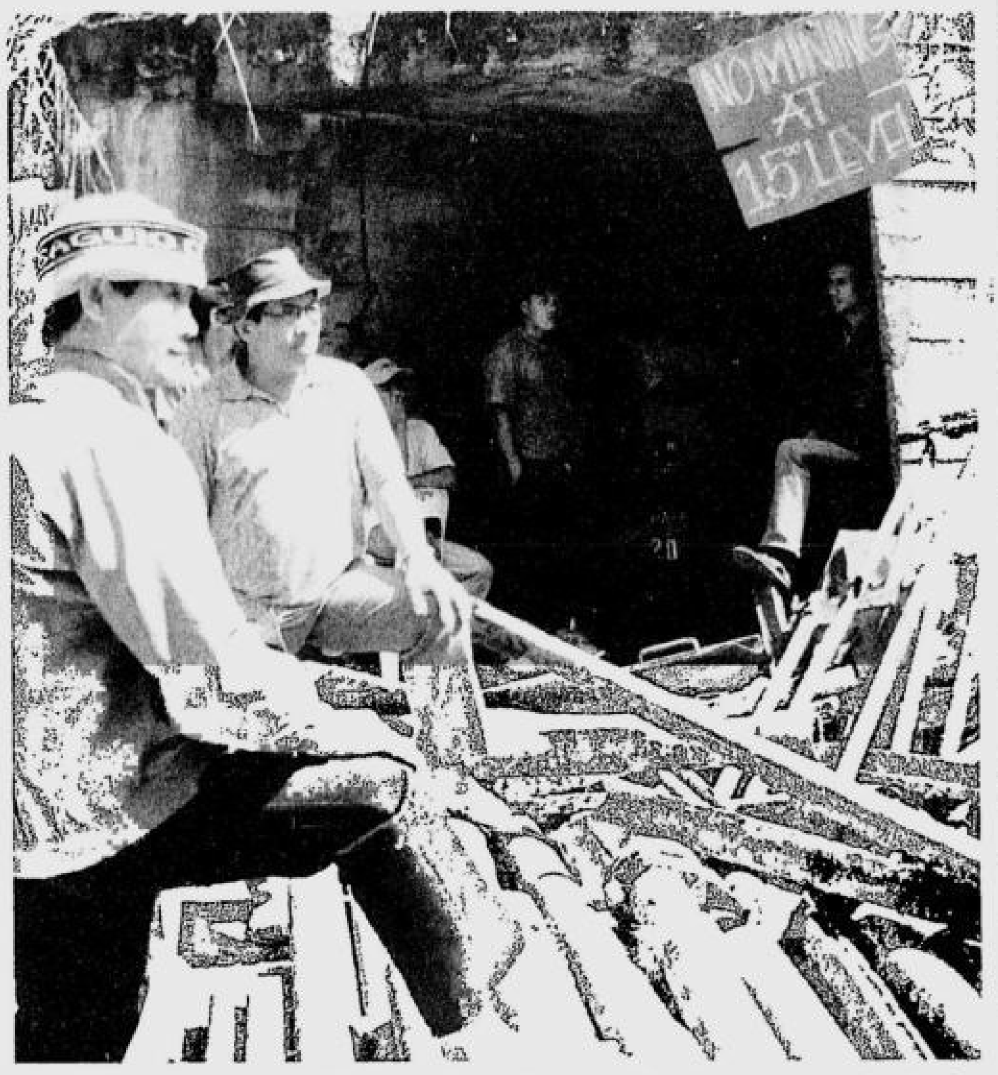
Reyes said the $20.7 million in revenues generated in last year's ESP benefited SMEs, which accounted for four of five firms that took part in the yearly fair.

The BPO sector employed 244,675 in 2006 and this figure is projected to grow to about a million by 2010.

Reyes added that this year, ESP intends to tackle the country's human resource development program to address the need for qualified BPO workers amid "extremely strong" demand.

Last month, global research firm XMG Inc. said the Philippines—although attractive due to the global outsourcing industry—would see a relatively flat growth rate because of the lack of government support and incentives, established local venture capital funding, and IT maturity among several large organizations.

Also, XMG said the global market for outsourced ICT services was projected to slow down slightly in 2007, mainly due to manpower supply constraints in offshore locations such as the Philippines and India—which account for a significant portion of outsourced ICT services.



THROUGH THE BARRICADE. Ibaloi residents of Barangay Virac, Itogon, Benguet barricade two portals of Level 1500 at the old Acupan mine shaft of Benguet Corp. They fear that the ground where the tunnel runs underneath their houses will collapse when mining operations continue. The Mines and Geosciences Bureau says their complaint has no basis, but Itogon residents refuse to believe MGB's findings and continue to block the tunnel. EV ESPIRITU

PNOC needs just a month to auction Malampaya oil

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO. CAN BID out the contract to develop the Camago-Malampaya oil reserves as soon as one month after the guidelines are finalized.

In an interview with reporters, PNOC officer-in-charge Pedro Aquino Jr. said a multi-agency task force was currently working on the final guidelines.

"When we already have the guidelines, we can finish the process in less than a month. We're still waiting for the task force to give us the final guidelines," he said.

Several months after it was set up, the task force in charge of formulating the rules for the bidding of the Camago-Malampaya oil leg continues to work on the guidelines, to ensure that the bidding terms of reference will have no loopholes once the auction process starts.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had earlier said that the task force needed some more time to ensure transparency in the bidding process and that all potential issues would be addressed from the outset.

"The task force is still working on (the guidelines). Some of the issues that they need to work out have to do with indemnity, insurance. Everything needs to be really clear, particularly in light of EO 556," he said.

The task force is composed of members of the PNOC and PNOC Exploration Corp. boards, as well as management and technical people of PNOC-EC.

The bidding rules and procedures should be in line with EO 556, an order that removed all of PNOC's authority to enter any partnership with regard to the development of the Camago-Malampaya oil leg.

The order stated that partners of government should be chosen through a transparent and competitive bidding procedure.

PNOC had earlier drawn flak for allegedly entering into a farm-in agreement with Mitra Energy Ltd. without going through transparent procedures and even bypassing a local group that also wanted to develop the Malampaya oil reserves.

This prompted the issuance of EO 556, and later the establishment of the task force in charge of formulating the specific bidding rules and procedures.

Lotilla said the task force wanted to make sure that there would be no conflict between Malampaya consortium members—Shell Philippines Exploration BV and Chevron Malamapaya LLC—and the future developer of the oil rim.

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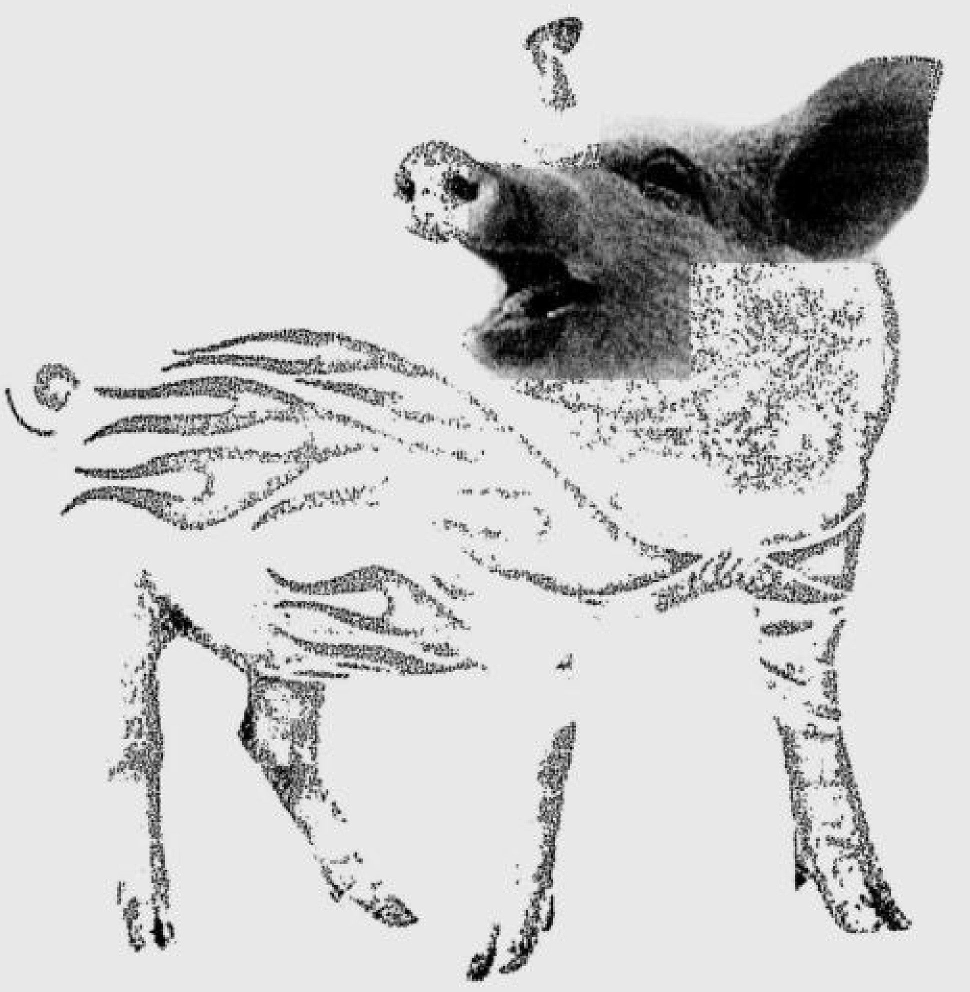

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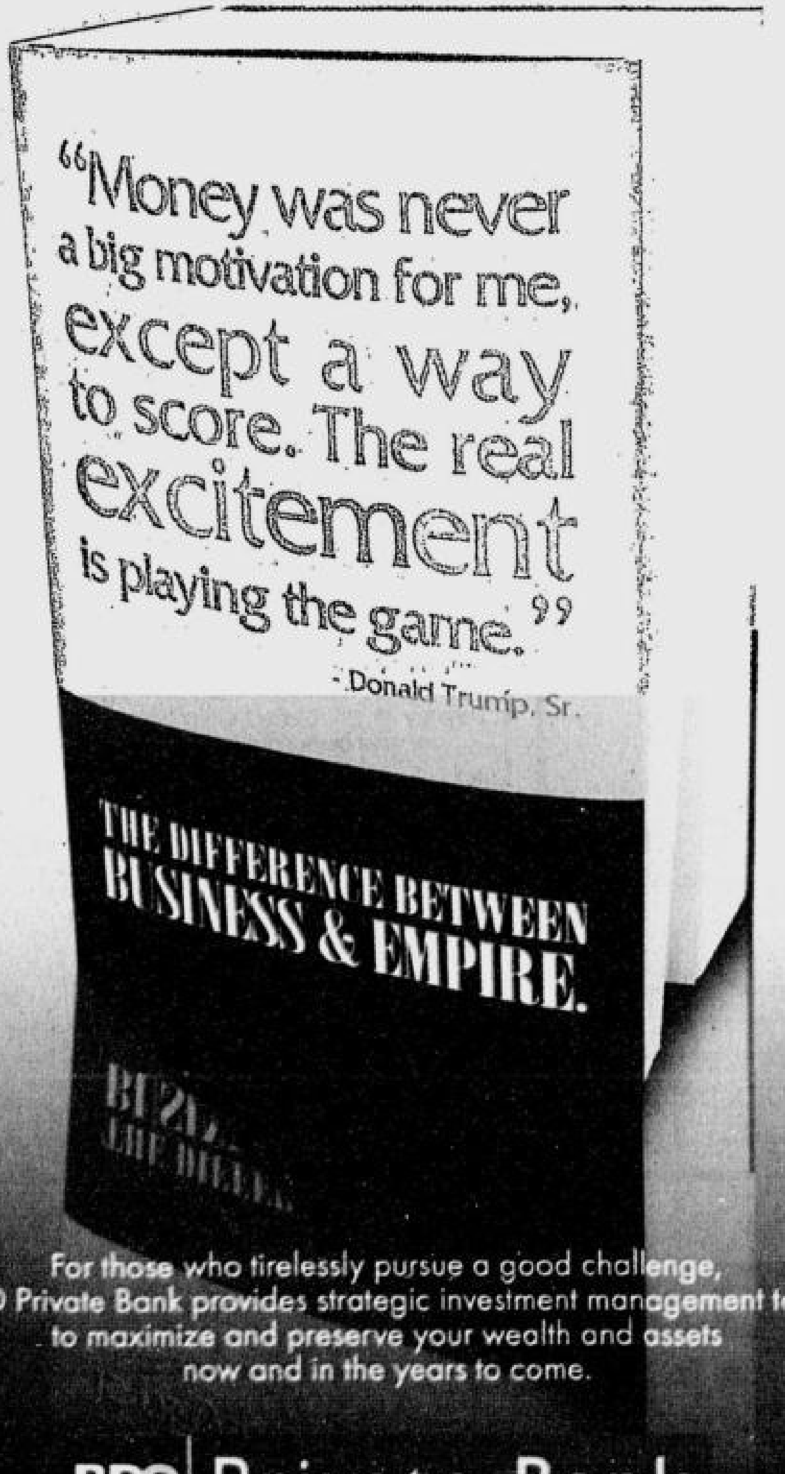
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IMF and Germany upbeat on world economic growth in 2007

ESSEN, GERMANY—GERMANY and the International Monetary Fund sounded an upbeat note on world economic growth last Friday, noting strength in Europe and Asia and a moderate slowing in the United States.

IMF Managing Director Rodrigo Rato, speaking to Reuters in Brussels, said the world economy was on course to grow by about 5 percent this year against 5.1 percent estimated for 2006.

"This means that the recovery is on track," he said during a pitstop on his way to a meeting in Essen of the G7 group of rich industrial nations, currently chaired by Germany.

Rato said he expected continued strong growth in Europe and Asia and only a slight slowdown in the world's biggest economy, the United States.

Last year, the IMF forecast 2007 world growth could slow to 4.9 percent or less.

German Finance Minister Peer Steinbrueck, whose country's economic growth nearly tripled in 2006, said Germany was making its contribution to world growth thanks to, among other things, low euro zone interest rates, which provided abundant liquidity.

"The global economy is in a good state and has been for several years," he told a news conference before the G7 meeting.

His views were echoed by Bundesbank President Axel Weber.

"The world economy has been in a very robust growth environment for the past five years with global growth of around 5 percent," Weber told the same news conference.

"World trade is still expanding dynamically. Germany and Europe are making a clear contribution with stronger domestic demand," he said.

European Union Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Joaquin Almunia was also optimistic about economic growth this year in the 13 countries using the euro.

"It is clear that we are enjoying a period of strong economic recovery and we have good reason to believe that this upturn will last," Almunia said in a speech in Germany.

The euro zone economy grew an estimated 2.6 percent last year after 1.4 percent in 2005, and the European Commission expects to revise upwards its November forecast for growth in 2007 on Feb. 16 from the previously envisaged 2.1 percent.

But officials also noted some risks to growth.

Steinbrueck pointed to the large current account and budget deficits in the United States against trade surpluses in Asia, which could trigger large currency swings that could hurt euro zone exports.

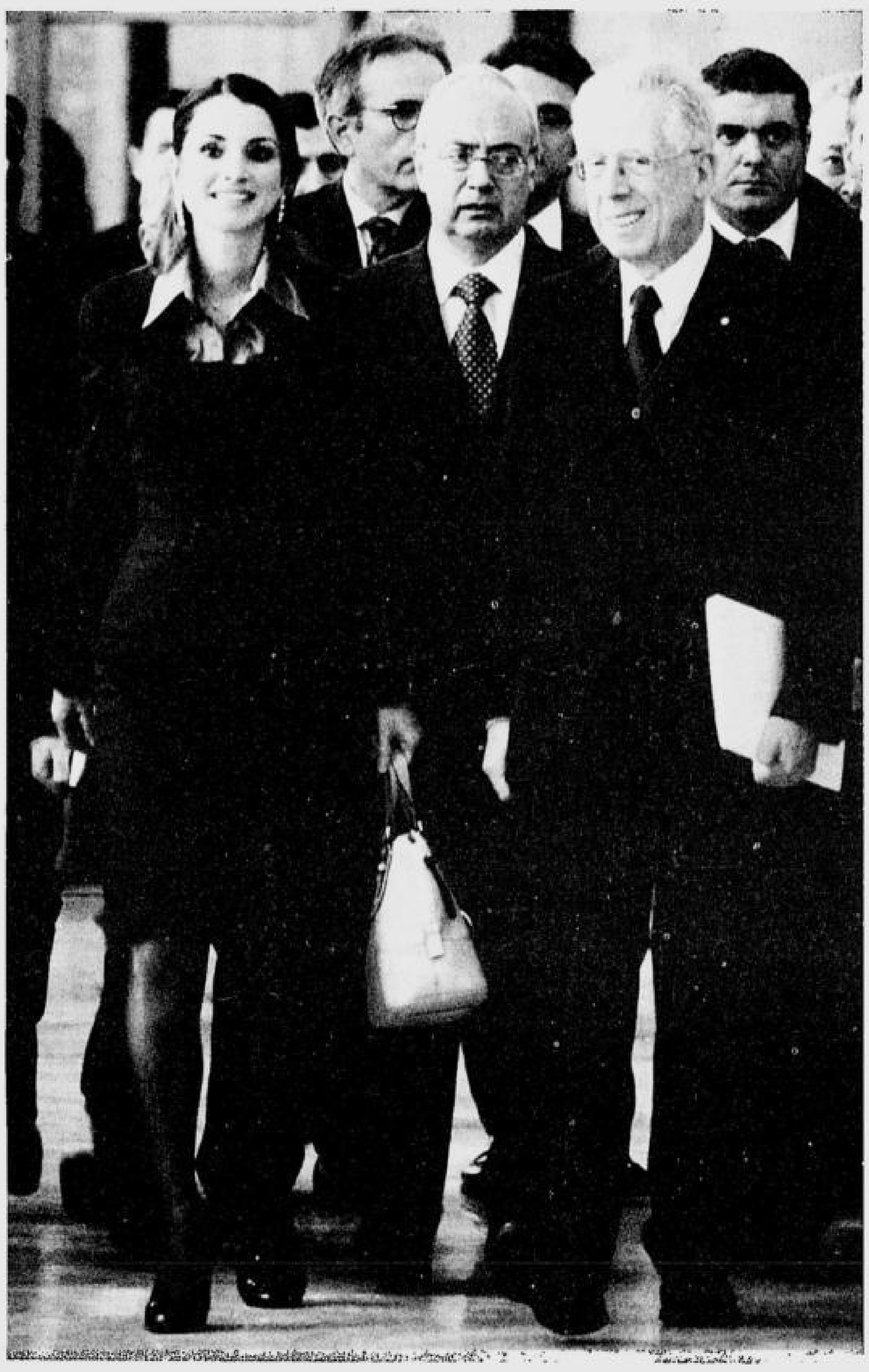
Weber was concerned about oil prices, which have risen to around $60 a barrel on Friday from around $50 in mid-January.

"The main factor is the oil price—there has been considerable volatility there recently," Weber said.

The European Central Bank, where Weber is a member of the rate-setting council, is concerned about the impact of oil price rises on prices in other sectors and on wage demands, so-called second-round effects the ECB wants to prevent with rate rises.

The IMF's Rato said risks to growth included inflationary pressures while Almunia urged euro zone economies to use the current upswing to shore up public finances and implement structural reforms.

Just last December, IMF First Deputy Managing Director John Lipsky said minor downward revisions to the 2007 forecast for world growth were likely. *Reuters*



ITALY'S Economy Minister Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa (right) walks with Jordan's Queen Rania before the launch of a campaign by rich countries, led by Italy, to fund vaccines for poorer nations, in Rome. REUTERS

Europe playing bigger role in world economy, G7 says

ESSEN, GERMANY—THE FINANCE MINISTERS and central bankers of the world's seven wealthiest countries met with their counterparts from the world's fastest growing economies on Saturday as clues about the group's planned communique became more apparent.

French Finance Minister Thierry Breton said late Friday that the G-7 communique would likely feature a paragraph on foreign exchange issues, but would not single out one currency.

Breton said the G-7 would acknowledge the bigger role that the 13-country euro zone has played in driving world growth.

"We will all say that the euro zone contributes more to world growth than previously," Breton said, adding that the outlook for the global economy was positive.

Euro Group president Jean-Claude Juncker echoed those remarks on Saturday, telling reporters the euro-zone economy has been growing at a robust pace.

The prime minister of Luxembourg, Juncker leads the informal group of finance ministers from the 13 countries that share the euro.

A final communique, and the G-7's recommendations, was due Saturday after the participants meet in the stately Villa Huegel manor, built in the 1870s for the Krupp family, a German industrial dynasty.

The G-7 officials, including German Financial Minister Peer Steinbrueck and US Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson, jumped into capital market issues with Chinese Finance Minister Jin Renqing and Xhou Xiaochuan, governor of the central bank.

When the G-7 formed, comprising Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, China was an insular, closed communist state.

In the three decades since, China's growth has exploded as it embraces elements of capitalism.

China has amassed more than $1 trillion in foreign currency reserves even while it buys dollars to control the value of the yuan. That is a practice that G-7 finance ministers have criticized in the past.

Paulson said the United States and China were largely in agreement on the steps they needed to take to reform their financial system, including currency flexibility. They differ only on the pace.

Another key issue for the group is the growth of hedge funds, a significant topic for Germany given their rising influence over companies—for example, in effectively blocking a bid by Deutsche Boerse AG for the London Stock Exchange PLC and forcing out the German exchange's CEO.

Mario Draghi, the governor of Italy's central bank and head of the Financial Stability Forum, said his group would compile a report on hedge funds of the G-7 members sought one.

"If (the G7) asks us, we will do it," Draghi told reporters.

German Bundesbank President Axel Weber told reporters that "hedge fund risks must be closely monitored," a sentiment later echoed by Paulson.

"It's a healthy thing to discuss; private pools of capital, hedge funds and private equity capital have grown significantly," Paulson said. "Anything that grows so fast should be scrutinized."

Germany has made the topic a priority for its EU and G-8 presidencies this year. Steinbrueck has said the country wants G-7 nations and EU countries, along with the United States, to try to preempt any risks that speculative hedge funds may pose to the global financial system. *AP*

BUSINESS BRIEFS

BMW Group posts strong results in Asia

SINGAPORE—The BMW Group posted strong growth results in Asia for 2006.

With the BMW Group achieving sales of 126,949 vehicles, the company has again achieved a new sales record in Asia, making the group the leading car company in the region's premium segment for the fourth consecutive year.

In all, retail figures for BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce cars delivered to customers were up 13.8 percent.

Sales of the BMW brand gained 15.5 percent, rising from 95,116 units to 109,848 units.

The results underline the leading position of all three premium brands of the BMW Group in Asia, underscoring the group's record performance and market leadership.

The BMW Group grew more strongly in Asia than in any other region of the world," said Dr. Michael Ganal, Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, who announced the latest results.

Convergys to open new facilities

CINCINNATI—Convergys Corp., a global leader in providing customer care, human resources and billing services, and the largest, outsourced contact center services provider in the world, announced it would open new facilities in Kentucky and Texas as part of a plan to increase capacity for its Customer Care business. These two new customer care centers are in addition to the previously announced Albuquerque, New Mexico facility Convergys acquired in December.

In the first quarter of 2007, Convergys expects to open a new contact center in Erlanger, Kentucky, in the Greater Cincinnati metropolitan area. That facility is expected to employ approximately 600 people.

Convergys plans to open a contact center in Longview, Texas, in the second quarter of 2007 with approximately 550 employees.

3M acquires filtration firm

3M, a global, diversified technology company with brands like Scotch, Post-it, Scotchgard, Thinsulate, Scotch-Brite, Filtrete, Command and Vikuiti, has acquired Cuno Inc., a global leader in the design, manufacture and marketing of a comprehensive line of filtration products for the separation, clarification and purification of fluid and gases.

Cuno and 3M provide innovative liquid filtration solutions to customers in many industries that include food and beverage, biological processing, electronics, inks and coatings, oil and gas, food service, retail and original equipment manufacturers.

Cuno products include proprietary depth filters and semi-permeable membrane filters, filtration equipment and vessels used in a broad range of potable water, health care and fluid processing applications.

These products effectively remove contaminants that range in size from molecules to sand particles.

Cuno solutions have been developed throughout 90 years of filtration experience.

US economy seen slowing down in 2007

WASHINGTON—THE US ECONOMY WILL grow slowly during the first half of the year, but pick up strength as the months pass, a survey of top forecasters showed on Saturday.

Panelists surveyed in the Blue Chip Economic Indicators newsletter said real gross domestic product, the government's broadest measure of economic output, would likely increase by 2.7 percent this year from last year.

This was somewhat stronger than the forecast of 2.3 percent last month, with more than half of those surveyed increasing their predictions.

In the first quarter, they expected real GDP to grow at a 2.5 percent annual rate and then pick up until it reached a stronger 3 percent rate in the fourth quarter.

Inflation, as measured by the government's Consumer Price Index excluding food and energy prices, is expected to remain around the Fed's perceived comfort range of 1 to 2 percent for all of this year and next, the survey forecast.

Core CPI is expected to advance by 2.3 percent in 2007 and by 2.2 percent in 2008.

Even though the forecasters worried about a slowdown in home building and weakness in business inventories, they said consumer spending would cover any shortfalls. Almost all, or 93.3 percent, said residential investment would contract this year and most thought it would shrink 11.6 percent.

The labor market is expected to remain strong throughout the year, according to the survey, with the jobless rate remaining at 4.6 percent in the first quarter and 4.7 percent in the second.

The outlook for businesses was somewhat strong.

Industrial production is expected to advance by 2.1 percent in the first quarter and by 2.4 percent for all of this year.

Even so, business investment is expected to moderate from earlier years.

The panelists forecast that real investment in business equipment and software would likely rise by 4.8 percent this year and by 5.7 percent in 2008. That compared to average increased of 7.6 percent over the past three years. *Reuters*

India's lead needed to restart stalled global trade talks, US official says

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES ASKED India last Friday to make "tangible" offers and to lead developing nations back to the moribund Doha Round of World Trade Organization talks.

"India's leadership is required to be able to get a WTO agreement that will help the whole world and will help India as well," US Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez said ahead of a Feb. 13-14 trip to New Delhi.

"I do want to impress upon all of the Indian government officials (that) without India's leadership, we can't do it," he told reporters.

Gutierrez urged India to enhance its offers in the agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors in a move that could be emulated by other developing economies to help achieve a breakthrough of the Doha Round.

"It has to be tangible progress and it has to be tangible movements in those areas, but the important thing is that developing nations are watching.

"They look to India to play a leadership role and they want to see India is moving before they move," Gutierrez said.

The Doha Round is deadlocked because of differences between the European Union and the United States on agriculture and because of discord between rich and poor countries about farming subsidies. In addition, industrialized nations are seeking greater access to developing nations for their industrial services and goods.

India and other developing countries particularly are demanding deeper reductions in tariffs on agricultural imports levied by rich nations, as well as bigger cuts in farm subsidies, which allegedly help farmers in the wealthy world to undercut their poor competitors.

The United States wants India and other key emerging nations such as Brazil to open markets for industrial goods and services, such as banking and telecommunications.

The fate of the negotiations faces a crunch deadline in the United States in June, when the "fast-track" negotiating powers of US President George W. Bush expire.

If the new Democratic leadership in Congress decides not to renew the special powers, then any deal struck risks being picked apart by US lawmakers.

Washington's chief trade negotiator Susan Schwab, the US Trade Representative, has stressed the importance of having the outlines of a deal before June.

Schwab met Friday with EU Commissioner Fischer Boel and EU Cabinet head Poul Skytte Christoffersen. Details of the talks were not available.

Gutierrez is scheduled to meet with senior Indian government officials, including Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath, and address the American Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The meetings will include discussions on enforcing intellectual property rights, reducing red tape for US companies doing business in India, and the United States-India civilian nuclear deal signed by President George W. Bush in December, according to a statement from Gutierrez's office. *AFP*

BUSINESS

RP tax effort increased to 14.3% in '06

Revenue measures beef up efficiency in tax collection

By Michelle V. Remo

AIDED BY MEASURES TO shore up revenue collection, the country's tax effort grew to 14.3 percent in 2006, marking a rising trend after consecutive years of decline.

Tax effort, a measure of a government's efficiency in collecting taxes, is the ratio between the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and the revenue collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and other offices.

The 14.3-percent tax effort last year came about after the BIR managed to collect P651.9 billion in taxes, while the Bureau of Customs turned in P198.2 billion worth of duties and value-added taxes. Other collecting agencies of the government accounted for the rest.

The GDP last year hit P6 trillion. GDP, the most common tool in measuring an economy's performance, is the value of all goods and services produced within an economy in a given period.

The "BIR effort"—the tax collected by the revenue agency over GDP—hit 10.87 percent in 2006 from 10 percent in 2005. The "BOC effort" improved to 3.3 percent from the previous year's 2.9 percent.

"(With last year's tax effort,) we are on our way back to the 17 percent that we are trying to attain," said Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran.

The highest tax effort of 17 percent was recorded in 1997, before the Asian financial crisis took its toll on tax collection.

Beltran, however, noted that it would take a few more years before the tax effort could reach pre-crisis levels.

The 2006 tax effort sustained the rise recorded in 2005. After registering seven consecutive years of decline starting in 1998, the country's tax effort rose to 12.7 percent in 2005 from 12.4 percent in 2004.

Fiscal authorities attributed the turnaround to measures that improved tax collection efficiency. Hard-pressed to help the government arrest a gaping budget deficit, the BIR was forced to implement programs to raise more taxes.

But the 14.3-percent tax effort for 2006 fell short of the 14.6-percent target set by the government. This was after the BIR posted a lower-than-expected collection figure last year.

Although the BIR registered a year-on-year rise in tax collection, the P651.9 billion worth of taxes it collected in 2006 was still lower than its P675.4-billion target for the year.

NTC hopes to settle Globe, consumer group's dispute

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) will try to amicably settle a dispute between Globe Telecom Inc. and consumer advocacy group TXTPower.

There was supposed to be a hearing last Friday on TXTPower's complaint against Globe's new Unlimitxt promos and Globe's defiance of an order to suspend the new rates pending trial.

The hearing did not push through following NTC's move to settle the issues between Globe and TXTPower. If the attempt fails, the hearings will then proceed.

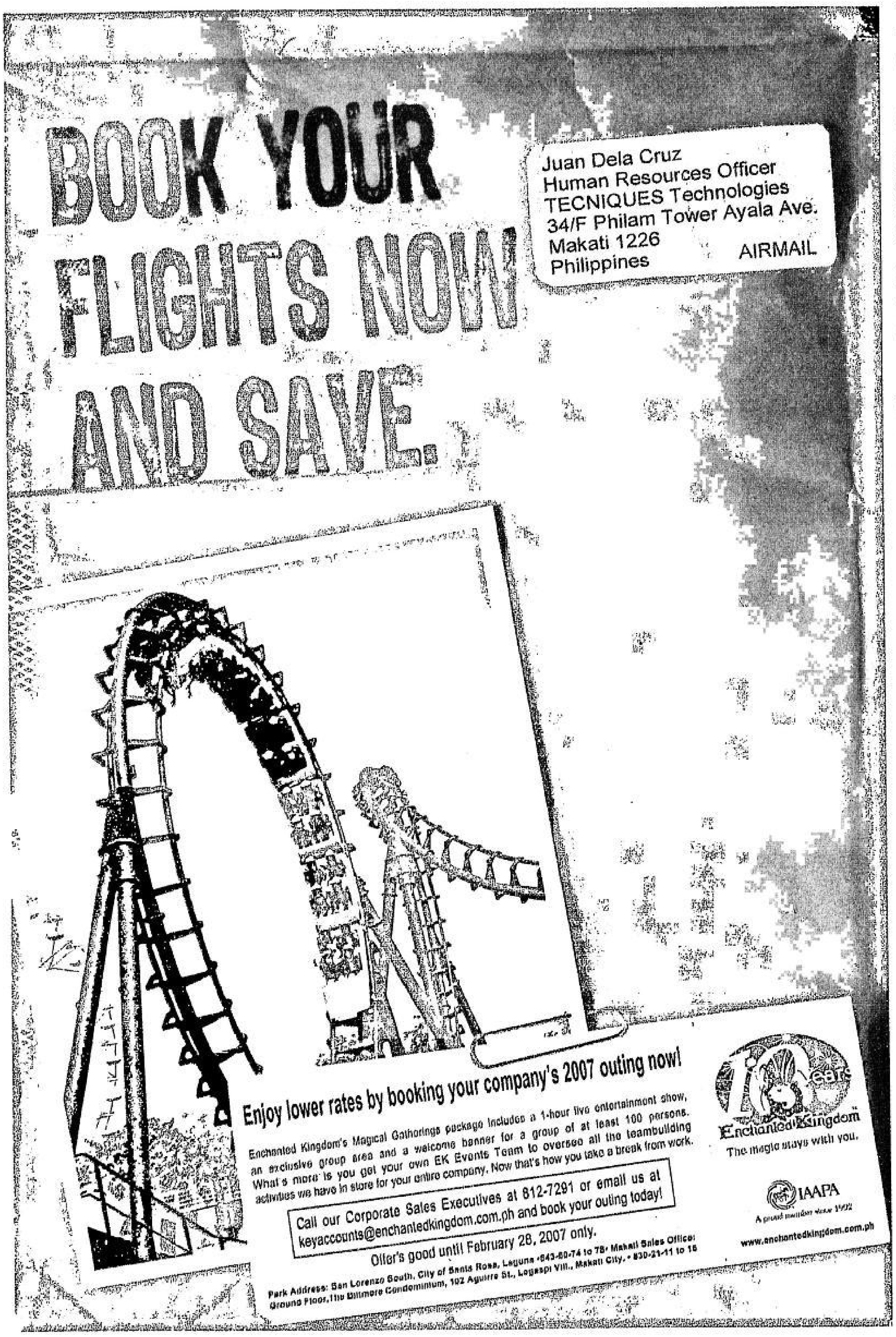
During a closed-door meeting with NTC, TXTPower made a "minimum demand" that Globe restore the previous promotional rates of P15 for one day of unlimited texting, P25 for two days, and P50 for five days alongside the P15 Daytime, P10 Night Time and the other new choices.

"The old rates should replace the P20, P40 and P80 for one, two and four days, respectively. If Globe agrees with this demand, we will immediately withdraw the complaint and lift the boycott," TXTPower said in a statement.

The NTC informed Globe representatives about the demand, and the two sides agreed to meet again on Feb. 14.

Globe spokesperson Jones Campos said the new Unlimitxt promo will continue in the meantime.

NTC chief of staff Atty. Lucio Espinoza said Globe might agree to the proposal of TxtPower or come up with a new bundle. But if the dispute is not settled by Feb. 20, the commission will conduct hearings and Globe may be penalized for not following an earlier order to suspend the new rates pending a hearing.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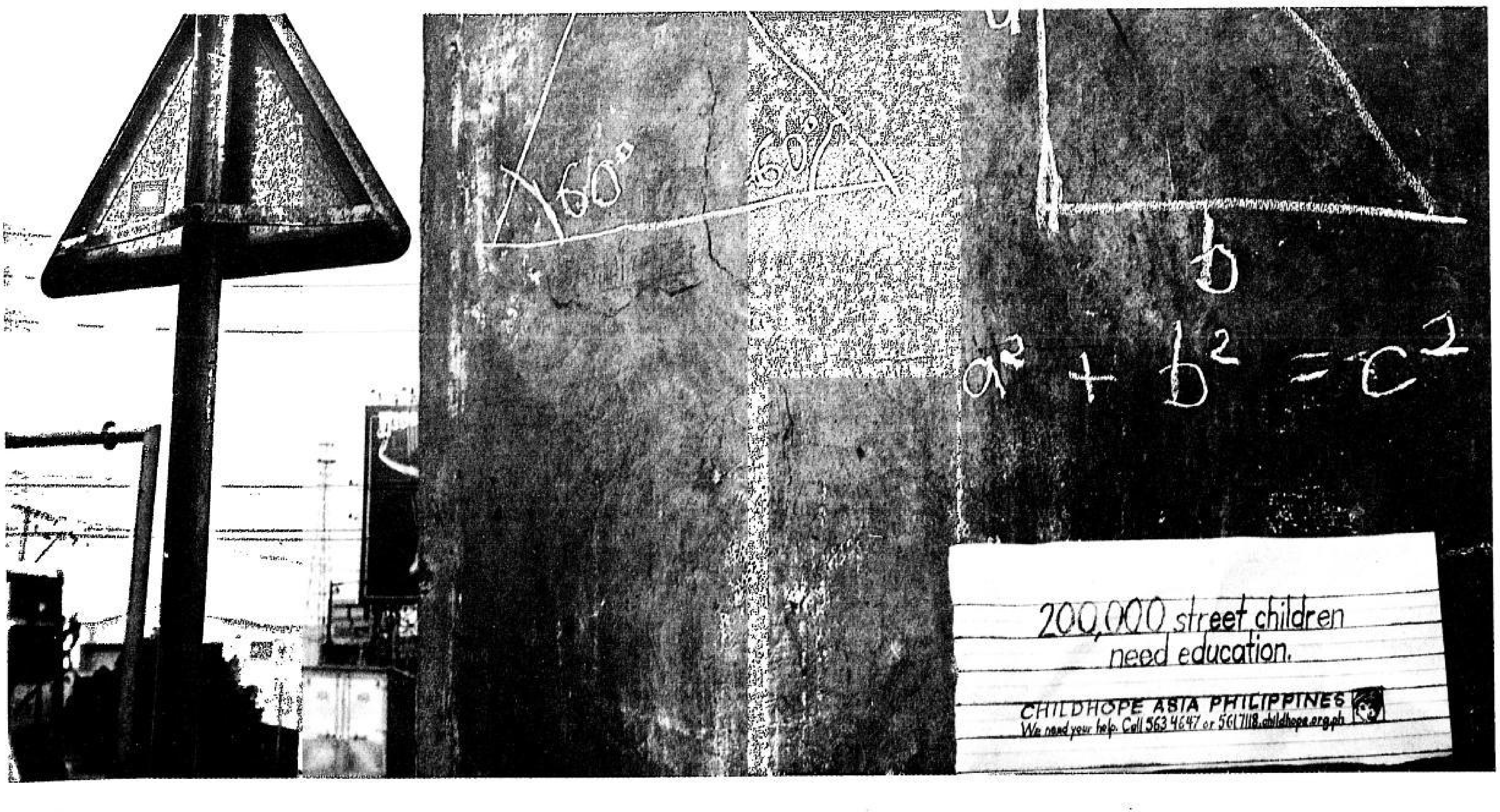
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See PC Buyer's Guide magazine December 2006 February 2007 issue Cybershops Section for details.
www.pcbuyersguide.com.ph

The success story of Metrobank

By George S.K. Ty

MANAGEMENT IS A PRACTICAL discipline measured by financial returns and competitive position. But it is easy to forget that success in business ultimately comes from a commitment to personal values.

When you look at Metrobank today, the tendency is to focus on its results, its size and its position. It is easy to overlook the elements that shaped its character.

As someone who founded, nurtured and grew the business, I would like to share with you some experiences that I believe have been important to Metrobank's success.

Starting the business

When I was 19 years old, my father asked me to set up a flour mill. And over the next three years, I started the mill and worked my way up, learning about running a business along the way. I became the general manager of Wellington flour mills after a while, watching over equipment and raw materials worth $6 million, a lot of money at the time.

As the company grew, we needed cash to expand and we had to borrow money. This was the first time I realized the importance of a bank. Helping businesses to grow seemed like a good way to make a living. I resolved to get into the banking industry and I have been in that business ever since.

It was not easy. In fact, it was very hard. I can still remember being a 25-year old man, with no banking experience and very little English, waiting endlessly in the central bank offices to follow up our banking license. After over three years of trying, the CB finally relented and in 1962, Metrobank opened its doors as a small bank in Binondo.

In the business of banking, making money is not the only goal; it is even more important to earn the trust of clients and to help them succeed, whether in their investments or their businesses. Banking is not merely the business of money; it is the business of trust. A proper banker may love the business but he can never forget that he also protects the interests of his clients and serves his community.

Even today, I wake up every day aware that not only am I responsible for the thousands of my employees and their families, but also for the hundreds of thousands of clients of the Metrobank group and the confidence of millions of the banking public. Such a responsibility cannot be borne lightly.

Growing the business

I have devoted my entire career to making Metrobank worthy of such a responsibility. Every workday for more than 40 years now, I start work at eight in the morning. Some days I feel lazy or sick, but I go to work because I have to set an example.

It's impossible to ask people to do something if you are not willing to do it yourself. There are times when I would prefer to spend time with my family, but I spend that time at work instead because I know that my family's well being also depends on my work.

These days, it is convenient to ignore a simple truth, that the surest way to succeed is simply to work harder and try harder. People often look for that one lucky break, that right opportunity that they think will magically guarantee success. They would be better served by simply working harder, day in and day out, month by month, year by year. I started doing this over 40 years ago and I continue to do this today.

At Metrobank, achievements are not made by grand decisions overnight but by doing hundreds of important little tasks during the day. This commitment to hard work and perseverance is the true secret of our success.

Today, Metrobank is beyond any one man. Among the most important lessons I learned over the decades is knowing how to choose good people and putting them into situations where they can succeed.

I am particularly proud of having fine people like Placido Mapa, Jr., James Go and Tony Abacan among our senior executives who reflect the values we hold dear.

I also take great pride in many other excellent executives who first emerged at Metrobank and moved on to positions of leadership in other banks and in government. We regard former Metrobankers who go on to greater success as the world's gain rather than our loss.

The personal cost of building a business is not cheap. Hardship and sacrifice are the companions of achievement and success. I may have missed out on many of my family's special moments. And I may have been considered harsh and over-demanding by many people whose opinions I value and respect. But I willingly bore these costs because I know, and I wanted others around me to learn, that hard work and sacrifice are necessary for anything worth having. Easy success can just as easily be gone.

I am also pleased that my children have paid their dues and earned their right to become part of the business. In the same way that my father raised me, my philosophy has been to give my children their education and opportunities but ultimately to have them work for their own future.

A rich man's children can easily amount to nothing. I have provided my children enough—actually, more than enough—for them to be comfortable. If they want more, and I would hope they do, they will have to get it from their own hard work.

Looking beyond

At some point, having worked so hard and sacrificed so much, we may find ourselves asking, how to put more meaning into our achievements? When that question came to mind many years ago, the answer to me was very simple: it was to give back and share the fruits of my success with the society that made my success possible in the first place.

From this thinking came the Metrobank Foundation, an institution which started with a $50-million dona-

THE SUCCESS/ B2-4

GEORGE TY

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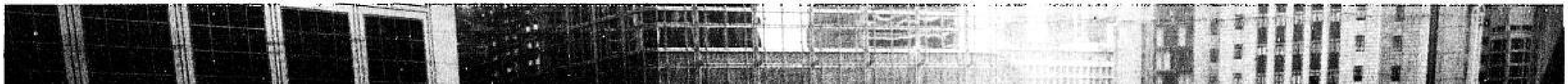

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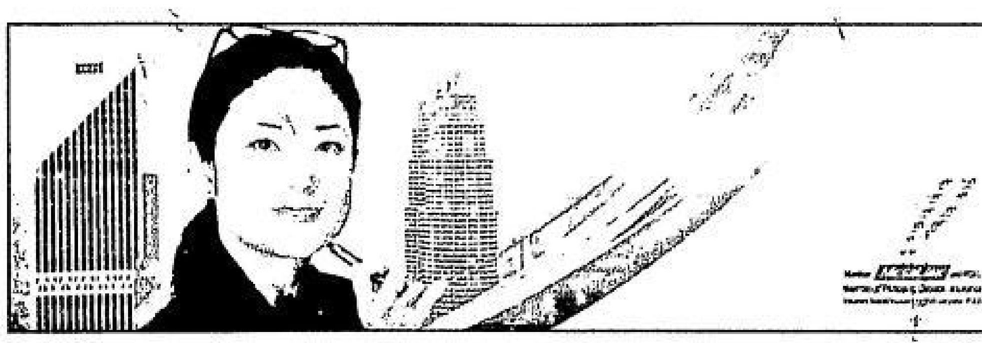

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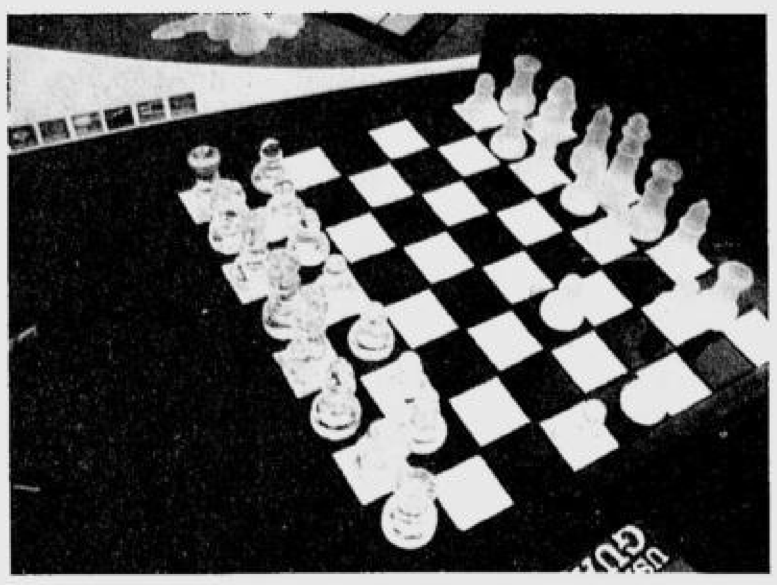


Roll-up USB chess set: Checkmate!

www.techdigest.tv

2006 was a USB-gadget year, when everything imaginable was placed on the other end of a USB connector—from mugs to plushies. This year, the trend continues with this roll-up chess set that connects to your PC. Each square has sensors which let the companion app know the pieces you moved and their new location. If you don't have anyone to play with, you can challenge your computer, or set the online multiplayer mode. You can even record your games for sentimental purposes. Getting this would only mean one thing: you're a nerd to the max!

InFusion: Radio anywhere

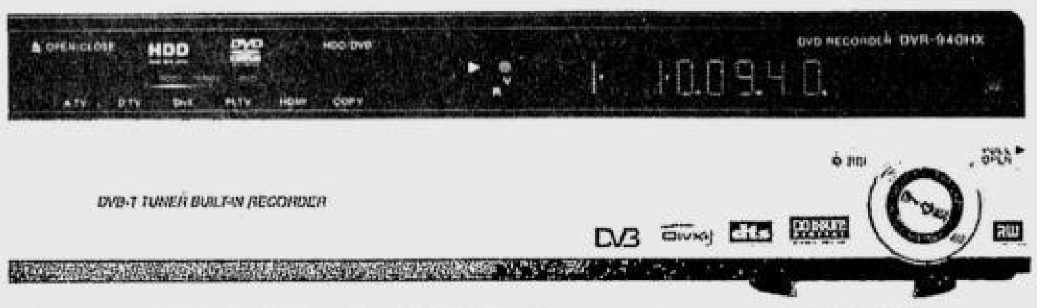
www.torianwireless.com

If you're the kind who ditches MP3 players for good 'ol radio, you better grab the InFusion. This Innovations Award-honored device streams any radio station in the world through the World Wide Web without requiring a laptop or PC. Its compact design makes it portable enough to be carried anywhere by travelers who want to stay in touch with local news and groovy songs.

NeoTune: iPod on your head?

www.rwc.co.jp

I'm amazed at how iPod accessories evolved last year. But what I can't believe is the NeoTune. Who would want to wear their iPod on their head? You?! Oh, well, if you like to carry your Nano without touching it all the time, then this is hands-free as hands-free can get. Warning: this might attract more thieves.



Pioneer DVR-940HX-S HDD: Record your whole life

www.pioneer.eu

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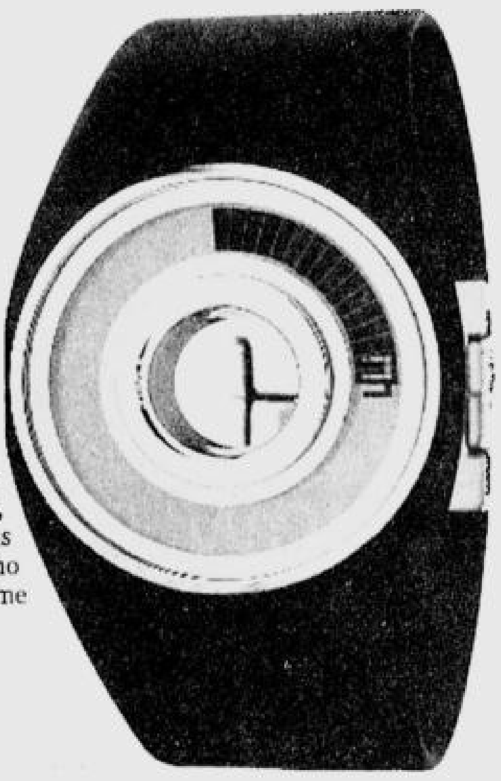
O-Ring Digi: Time is black

www.fossil.com

This digital watch will make reading time complicated but stylish. The O-Ring Digi watch from Philippe Starck displays hours as numbers while minutes are displayed in segments. The center is completely transparent, and other control buttons are found at the back. Who says time is gold? Nope, time is sleek black.



Samsung YP-K3: Slimmest and sleekest

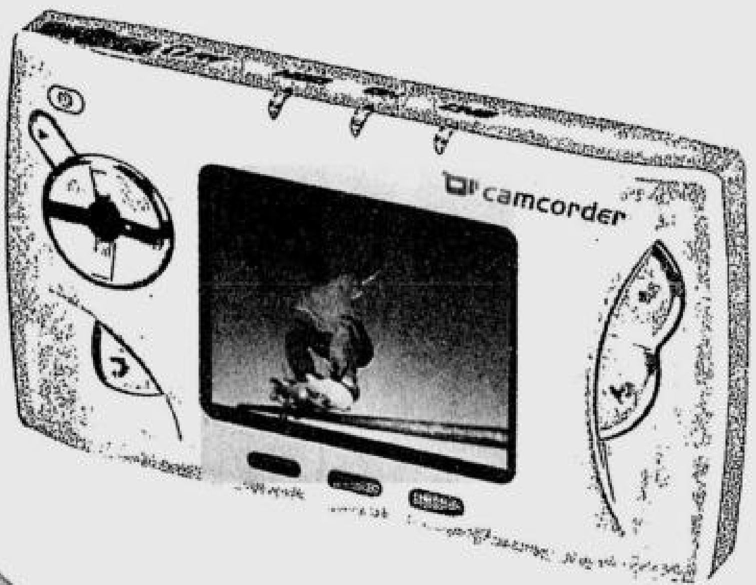
www.samsung.com

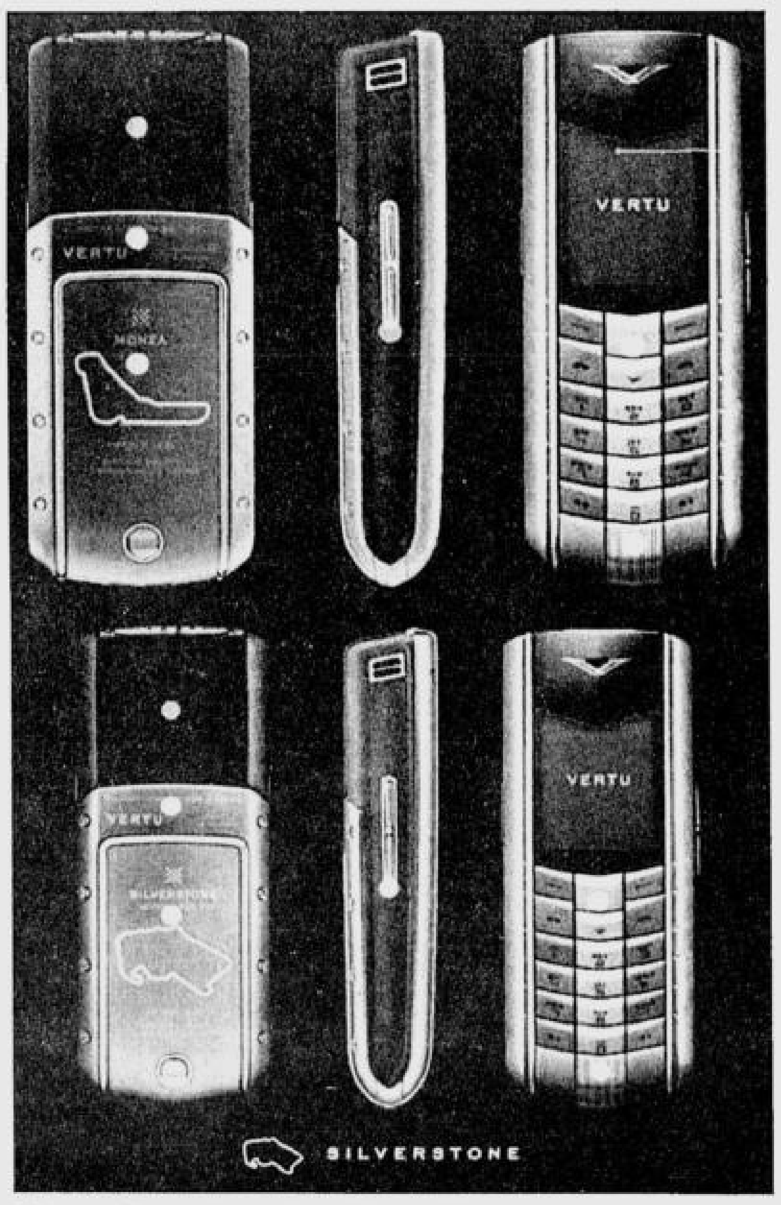
The YP-K3 is the YP-K5's little brother. Though lacking the K5's sliding speakers, the K3 garners additional *pogi* points with its 0.27-inch width and a larger 1.8-inch screen. It still has the blue touch pad for controls, OLED screen, and long battery life. The Samsung YP-K3 comes in 2GB, 4GB and 8GB capacities.

Archos Gmini 402 camcorder console: Multimedia giant

www.archos.com

The Archos Gmini is everything. Everything means video camera, stills camera, MP3 player, game console, movie file player, and voice recorder. This compact device turns into a multitasking gadget with its 20GB capacity and 1.2-megapixel camera. You can record up to 50 hours of video, store up to 200,000 photos, and listen to 10,000 songs. So believe in the motto: "Great things come in small packages." This is it!

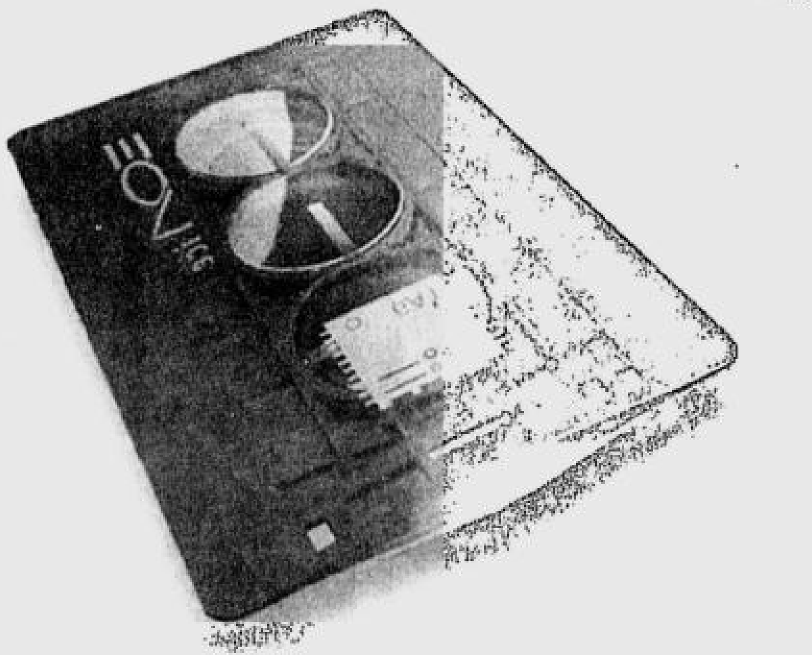




Vertu Racetracks: Own the legends

www.techdigest.tv

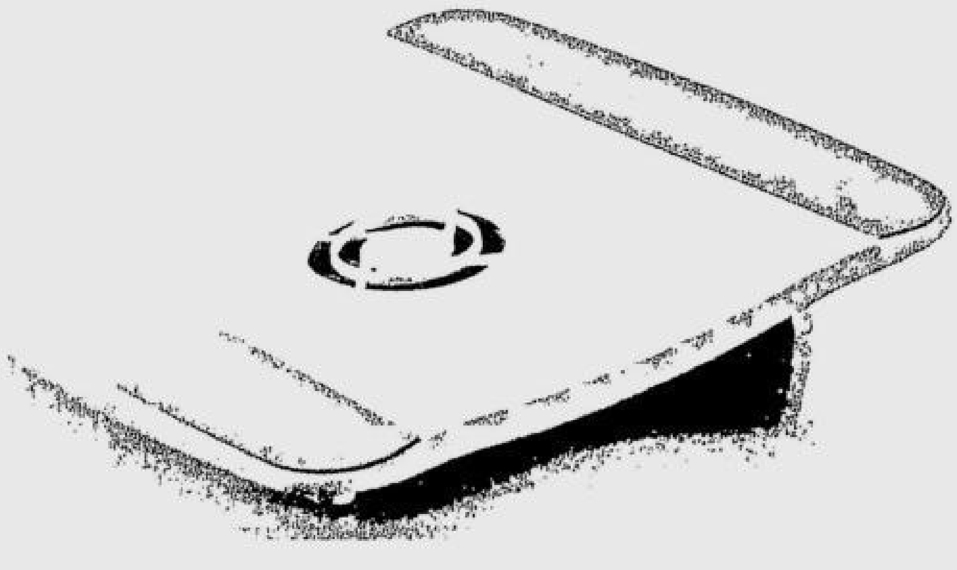
If you still have money left after purchasing our gadget lust item last issue, you can still throw away precious moolah for yet another Vertu luxury: the Vertu Racetracks Legends. This phone comes happily ensconced in a limited edition carbon fiber case featuring six of the world's most legendary racetracks: Monza (red), Silverstone (green), Le Mans (blue), Indianapolis (black), Monaco (yellow) and Nuerburgring (titanium grey). You don't want to know how much this whole collection costs.



Eon Ice: Light in style

www.iwantoneofthose.com

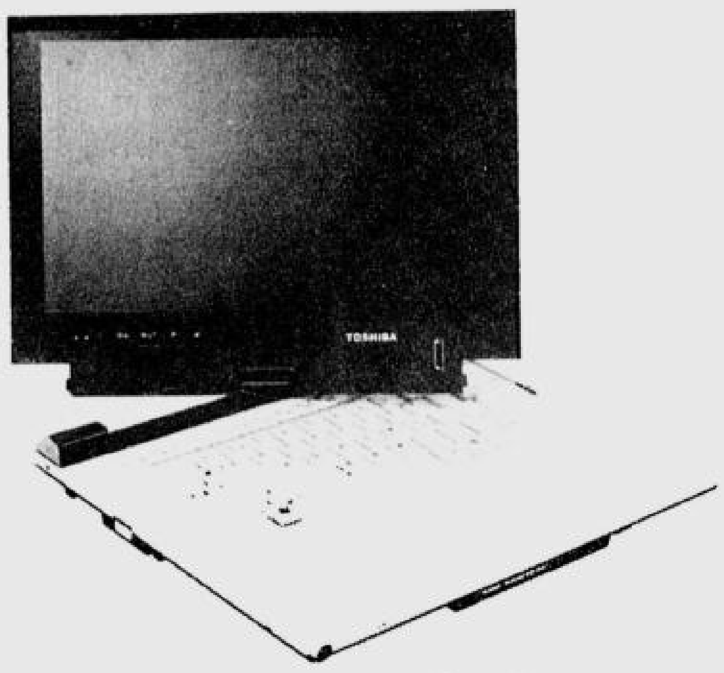
This slick little torch is perfect for the style-savvy geeks. With its credit card size, the Eon Ice fits any pocket perfectly (yes, even if you're wearing skinny jeans). It emits a stunning bright blue light from two LEDs. You don't even have to change its batteries and bulbs. It's waterproof, shockproof, and crushproof, but it's easily prone to being misplaced. Especially when its owner is as forgetful as you are.



Belkin cooling stand: Keep it cool

www.belkin.com

A laptop comes with built-in cooling features, but just in case yours gets too hot, here's a solution: the Belkin Cooling Stand. It prevents your laptop from overheating by pushing the hot air away. The unique wave design assists in natural airflow. Now that's one cooling wonder.



Toshiba Portege R400: Satisfaction guaranteed

www.toshiba.com

The Toshiba Portege R400 is a Windows Vista PC and more. Aside from the usual whistles that come with the most-awaited OS, this laptop is also a tablet PC. Regardless if the PC is turned on or off, Toshiba's Edge Display lets you view email and calendar dates by merely glancing at the edge of the lid. Toshiba's EasyGuard technology also beefed up the Portege's security features with biometric fingerprint reader, multi-level passwords and other security suites. Get the world's first wireless dockable notebook computer for US$ 2,599.00 (about PhP 127,351.00), and you'll be happy for the rest of your life.

Mobile Tickles your Lovebone this February

Mobile Philippines' February issue is out now with the lovely Iya Villania on the cover! Mobile is the only magazine specializing in personal electronic devices from phones to music players to laptops. For grab and go tech news, you can visit us at www.m-ph.com. Grab a copy now from newsstands for just P100!

Cyber crimes pay as hackers' take estimated to reach $8B

By Abigail L. Ho

FROM $100 to $1,000 GAINS, CYBER CRIMInals are getting even smarter this year, taking aim at enterprise data centers in a bid to boost their cyber crime revenue to as much as $8 billion, according to security firm Fortinet.

Network security expert and Fortinet chief marketing officer Richard Stiennon said that while attackers were becoming "less innovative" in developing new threats, they were becoming more creative in formulating new and more lucrative business models.

According to Stiennon, cyber criminals are moving beyond the traditional victims of their attacks. Specifically, they are looking more and more at attacking enterprise data centers instead of individual Internet users.

"2007 could very well be the year that attackers get smart about attacking enterprise data centers in a fashion that could double their cyber crime revenue, moving their market to between $4 billion and $8 billion," he said.

Cyber extortion attempts this year would also no longer be confined to financial institutions or enterprises, he said, as cyber criminals also take aim at local governments, schools and manufacturers.

He said now that the attacks are directed at institutions that used to be free of such danger, there is a greater need for enterprises to protect themselves against such threats.

"As the drivers for cyber crime increase, there is a lack of inhibitors to counter the escalating threats," Stiennon said.

Apart from the expected doubling of cyber crime revenue this year, Stiennon said 2007 would also see a significant growth in the number of identity theft cases worldwide.

More attacks would also be directed at wireless networks, such as the now fairly ubiquitous Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity) connection.

Other Stiennon predictions for 2007 include spamming abuse in the popular YouTube video-sharing site, and a more mature and more secure MySpace social networking service.

Smart acquires key to better serve customers

TAGAYTAY CITY, CAVITE—SUBSCRIBERS OF cellular giant Smart Communications Inc. can expect even more efficient service from the mobile operator, as it implements a new system that will enable it to be more responsive to its customers' needs.

The wireless carrier has tapped Sun Microsystems Inc. and open source database firm Greenplum for a data warehouse appliance that will allow it to more easily profile each of its 22 million subscribers, in preparation for the rollout of new services.

Smart will now be using the Sun Data Warehouse Appliance, which is powered by technology from Sun Microsystems and Greenplum.

"The sheer amount of data involved in supporting more than 22 million subscribers generating an average of 700 million text messages a day has always been the key challenge in obtaining deeper insight," said Alexander Seminiano, head of the convergent platforms group at Smart. "The Data Warehouse Appliance by Sun and Greenplum should provide unprecedented performance and scale, enabling us to better understand our customers and their needs."

He said that with the new Data Warehouse Appliance, Smart would be able to provide its subscribers with better service, by determining what types of other value-added services it could roll out in the future.

Greenplum president and co-founder Scott Yara said that with the new appliance, Smart would be able to provide better call support to its subscribers, as well as more easily determine fraudulent activities being conducted within its network, among other things.

"The appliance will allow easier analysis and recall of data at a lower price. What used to cost businesses around $1 billion per terabyte to store now costs only $25,000 per terabyte because of the Sun-Greenplum partnership," Yara said.

Greenplum chief executive Bill Cook said Smart would definitely be able to "further improve the customer experience" and come out with exciting new services with the use of the new appliance.

"Leveraging the massive amounts of information that wireless carriers generate has been the Holy Grail to delivering the next generation of compelling value-added services," Cook said.

Not only would the cost of storing and analyzing data go down for Smart, but the length of time it took to process huge amounts of data would also be shortened, Sun Microsystems Philippines strategic account manager Paul Bisnar said.

He related that Smart normally took around five hours to process 12 million transactions.

During simulations done using the Data Warehouse Appliance, he said data processing took only a little more than 19 minutes for as many as 24 million transactions.

The new appliance, including implementation and system integration, cost only about $500,000, Bisnar said. *Abigail L. Ho*

What's Phishing?

By Riza T. Olchondra

IF YOU HAVE EVER RECEIVED A cheerful e-mail saying you won a raffle prize, or a formal-looking one saying that a certain bank has approved your non-existent credit card application, you have been targeted by an ever-increasing number of phishing activities, malware (malicious software) expert Maros Mozola said in a media briefing.

What's Phishing?

Phishing is any type of activity that tricks someone into giving away sensitive information, usually credit card details and passwords, that can be used for criminal activity such as theft, Mozola told reporters.

Quoting a study by the Anti-Phishing Working Group, Mozola said that an average 18,000 phishing incidents are reported every month and the number increases by more than 10,000 every month.

Phishers often use the name of known companies or a name found in the target user's e-mail directory. Phishers then convince recipients to reveal information or open files that would plant spyware for stealing information. Once installed, these spyware could take one's PC hostage and use it to do more phishing.

"The trend now is to use the user," Mozola said.

Avoiding phishing

Aside from steering clear of website links and e-mails from unknown sources, Mozola said Internet users would do well to install protective programs in their PCs.

"The required response time has moved from months, to weeks, to hours, and now to less than a few minutes, unless users start becoming proactive," he said.

There are currently a number of protective systems in the market such as those from ESET, TrendMicro, Panda, CA, Kaspersky, McAfee, Microsoft Onecare and Symantec.

Asked whether it would be wise for users to run separate applications to guard against phishing, viruses, hacking, adware, and spyware, Mozola said most of these applications not only slow PC performance, running these programs together could interfere with each other and ruin the way one's computer works.

"Get the one that works best for you, does not consume much space, and allows you to work without having to worry about pop-up messages with warnings," Mozola said.

Mozola is the senior vice president of ESET LLC, whose ESET NOD32 system was named best anti-virus product for 2006 by independent testing firm AV-comparatives.org.

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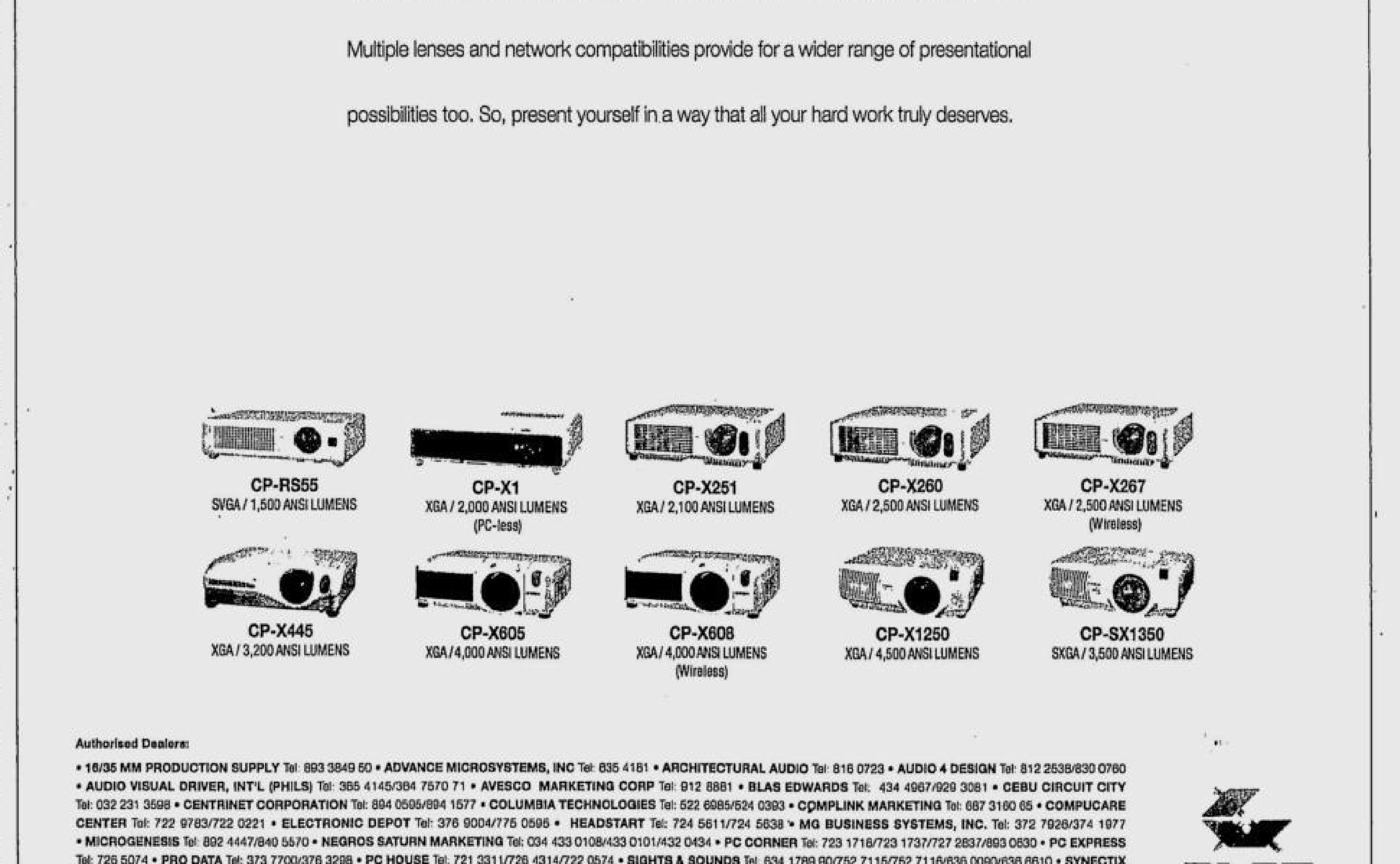

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Change of corporate status

Corporate Securities Info
Raul Palabrica

IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF events, non-stock corporations are supposed to continue operating as such until the purpose for which they were organized is accomplished.

These corporations are formed for charitable, religious, cultural, educational, civic service or other similar purposes.

In keeping with these objectives, the law prohibits non-stock corporations from distributing any part of their income to their members or officers in the form of dividends.

Whatever profits the corporation may earn as an incident to its operation must be used to promote the purpose for which they were organized.

Service to others, not the financial gratification of the members, should be the guiding principle of non-stock corporations.

But, sometimes, people or motives change.

The members of a non-stock corporation could wake up one morning and decide, for one reason or another, to cease operating in the form they earlier planned and convert to a stock corporation.

Change

Terminating the existence of a non-stock corporation is easy. It can be done by simply amending the corporate term stated in the Articles of Incorporation.

Upon approval of the amendment by the Securities and Exchange Commission, the corporation will undergo a liquidation process.

The corporation's assets have to be parceled out strictly in accordance with the distribution plan stated in the Corporation Code.

The officers and members of the corporation cannot partake of any share in the assets under liquidation unless authorized by the Articles of Incorporation or by-laws.

However, converting a non-stock corporation to a stock corporation in one step is a different story. Our laws do not allow it.

The reason behind the prohibition was explained by the SEC in a letter to a group of farmers who organized themselves into a non-stock corporation that engaged in warehouse and rice milling operations.

Apparently, the capitalist bug had bitten the farmers. They felt their setup was a hindrance to their ability to expand their operations and enjoy its benefits.

They wanted to convert their organization to a cooperative which has (except for some minor items) all the attributes of a stock corporation.

Like stock corporations, cooperatives are organized to earn profits for their members depending on the amount of their contributions to their capital.

The SEC stated that the Cooperative Code (or Republic Act 6938), the legal framework under which the farmers wanted to re-organize, encourages the formation of cooperatives "to attain increased income and savings and ... promote the equitable distribution of net surplus."

Prohibition

Without impugning the farmers' motives for the proposed conversion, the SEC explained that non-stock corporations hold their funds in trust for carrying out the purposes expressed in their charter or Articles of Incorporation.

Thus, their members are not entitled to any profit that may be obtained out of the income from their operation or other assets of the corporation.

The outright conversion to a cooperative sought by the farmers would, according to the SEC, be "tantamount to distribution of its assets or income to its members inasmuch as after its conversion, the assets of the non-stock corporation may now be treated as contributions of the members of the cooperative."

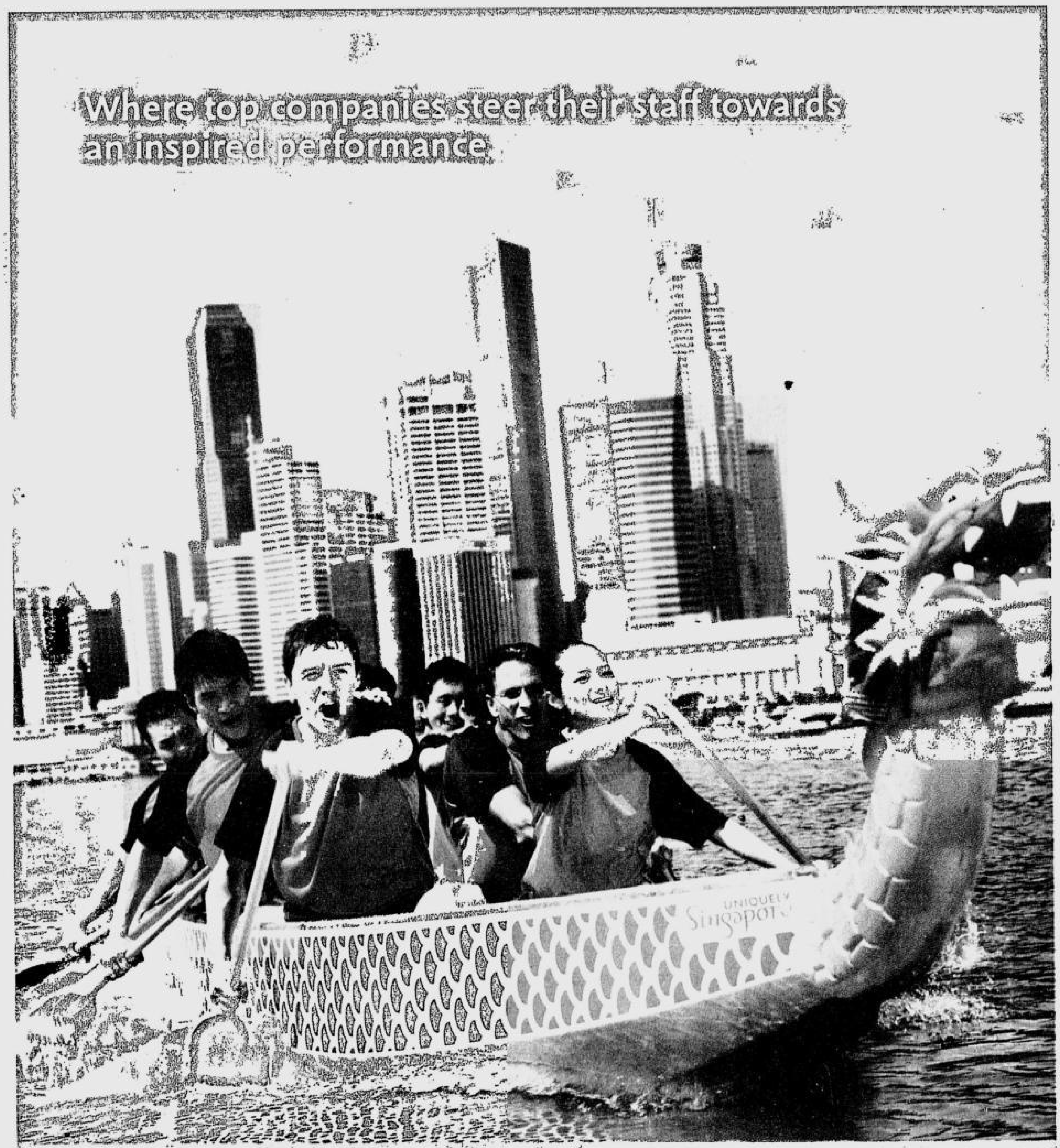
In addition, the SEC stated that "the scheme might defraud the public who may have given gifts or grants to non-stock corporations in order to carry out the purposes for which they are organized since after its conversion the donated assets will now be in the name of the cooperative for the benefit of the members."

Amending the non-stock corporation's Articles of Incorporation to enable it to engage in activities reserved for stock corporations will not cure the defect in the proposed conversion.

To accomplish the farmers' objective without running afoul with the law, the SEC advised them to, first, dissolve their corporation in accordance with the prescribed procedures so its assets can be properly liquidated.

Then, they can organize themselves into a cooperative or stock corporation that will legally allow them to divide among themselves, by way of dividends, the fruits of their collective efforts.

The approach is a little cumbersome, but it's perfectly legal. Indeed, there are several ways of skinning a cat. *(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.)*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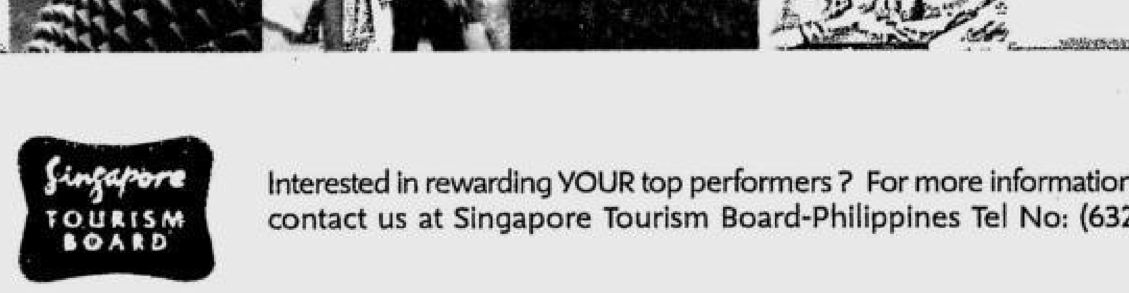

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The success ...

From page B2-1

tion when the exchange rate was 26 to 1.

This represents my concern for the community and the Filipino people. The foundation's works are a reflection of my gratitude to this country, an expression of appreciation and thanks for all the opportunities opened to me by the Filipino people.

The charities and public services are also a reminder that our hard work, thriftiness and discipline are not only for the sake of profits but also to share with others and the whole community.

Every time I travel, I am reminded about how fortunate I am to have started out in the Philippines, whose society and people took me in, made my business possible and enabled it to succeed. I consider the Philippines to be the best country for someone like me and for a business like Metrobank, and I am privileged to give back the blessings this country has showered on me.

We can certainly try to do a lot more to make the Philippines a better place for everyone else.

Throughout my career, starting out as a would-be banker to growing the business to where it is today, I have been fortunate to have people who have been constant sources of strength.

First, I wish to thank my family for their steadfast understanding and support these many years. Second, I wish to thank my partners and colleagues in the Metrobank group for their loyalty and excellence on behalf of our common enterprise. And finally, I would like to thank the Filipino people for taking me in and giving me a chance to succeed.

In retrospect, this has been my simple guide: I had to learn self-discipline so I could have a successful business. Through this business, I could then take care of my family and employees.

And finally, the fruits of this successful business could then be shared with the rest of the community. I hope my story can be the story of every businessman in this country.

Opportunities for success and for making social contributions still abound. If this management award can help make my example accessible to others, then perhaps the human lessons of Metrobank may become an asset even more valuable than its business.

Speech delivered by Metrobank Group chair Management Association of the Philippines Management Man of the Year for 2006 George S.K. Ty during the awarding ceremonies.

(Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph).

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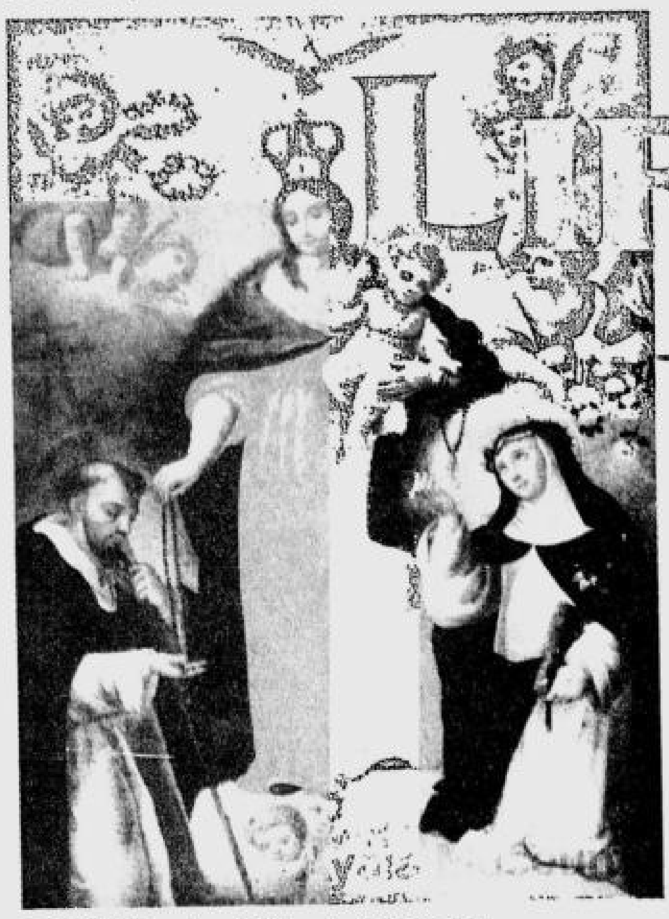
MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS

Art of the Chinese diaspora



DAMIAN Domingo's "Nuestra Señora del Rosario," Heirs of Jaime V. Ongpin Collection

By Constantino C. Tejero

OF ALL FOREIGNERS WHO came to stay in the country, the ones who proved to be the real friends of the natives were not the Spaniards or the Americans but the Chinese.

So says historian Ambeth Ocampo, who chairs the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, by way of introducing the six-section exhibition "Chinese Diaspora: Art Streams from the Mainland" during the roundtable discussion with the media at the Ayala Museum.

He touches on this thesis with anecdotal examples of how in our prehistory Chinese culture seeped into our ancestors' way of life and left hard evidence in their wake. It's just a brief insight, as Ocampo is curating one of the exhibition's sections, thus presumably will be elaborating on his thesis with a whole spread of hard evidence.

The series of exhibits will be spread in several venues of the museum, most of them on the fourth-floor galleries. It opens Feb. 15, in time for the Chinese lunar New Year and the visit of Singapore President S.R. Nathan, and will be on view until May 27.

This is the first time the museum is mounting an exhibition this big, says Ayala Museum operations director Angela de Villa-Lacson. And it will certainly contribute to the understanding of the relevance of Chinese art and culture to the Filipino way of life.

"I think this is going to be a fascinating exhibition," says Fernando Zobel de Ayala, co-vice chair of the Ayala Foundation board of trustees. "And as you see the list of sponsors that came in, it is an indication of how hungry everyone is to learn more about our culture and the Chinese influence in our country. So we really are very excited."

Material culture

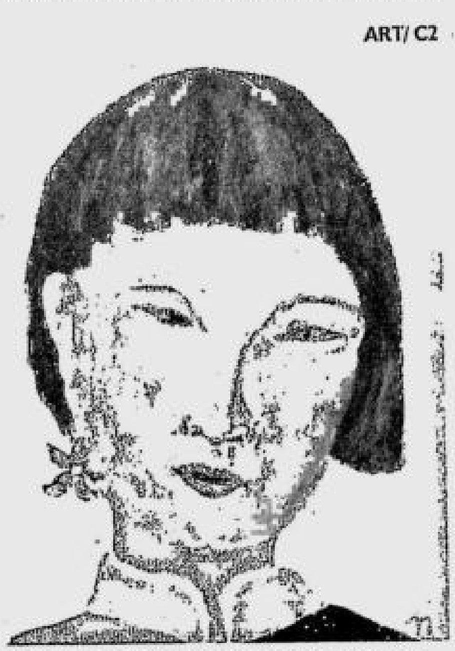
The massive and comprehensive exhibition was conceptualized four years ago by museum director Florina Capistrano-Baker, who's now based in New York as the museum's director of international exhibitions. Starting with negotiations with Singapore's Asian Civilisations Museum, she developed the concept of the show and its related themes with the section curators.

Petty Benitez-Johannot, the museum's deputy director and chief curator, explains the concept: "The Malay straits and the Philippine archipelago have long been at the crossroads of the great cultures of India and China. With others in the region, our countries have been nestled between the influence of South Asia, that is, the subcontinent that is India, and East Asia, which is Mainland China. The historical connection with China comes into focus in different ways through these exhibits, which feature objects that cover a millennium—from the 9th century to the 21st century."

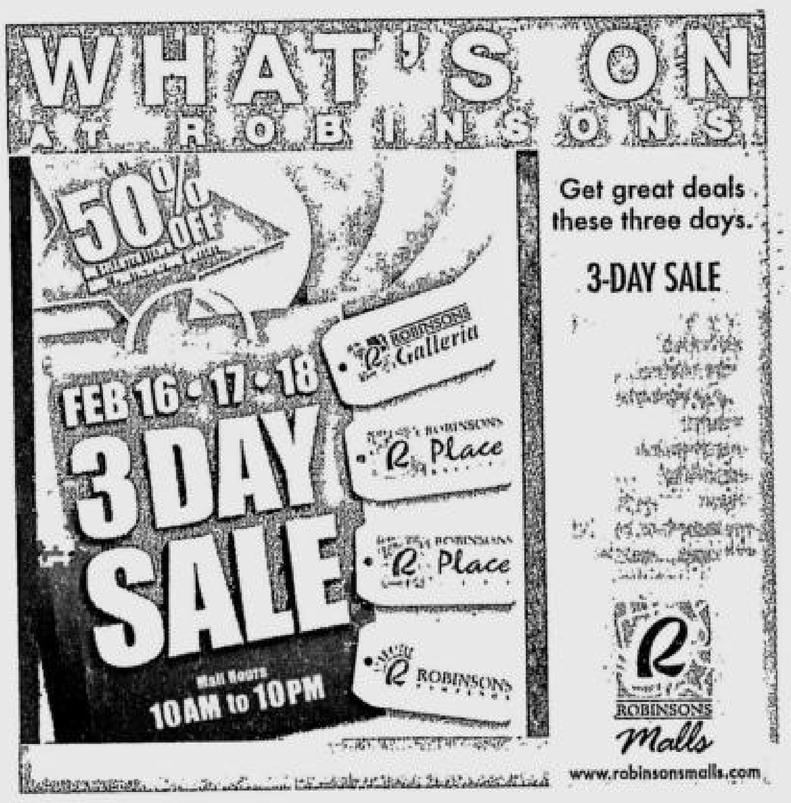
The first section is "The Peranakan Legacy," a loan exhibit from the Singapore museum curated by David Alan Henkel, consisting of over 200 artifacts.

The exhibition note contextualizes these distinctive art forms: "These are outstanding samples from the gilded age of the Peranakan, the Straits-born Chinese community that grew from massive migrations from Mainland China

ART/ C2



"CHINITA in Yellow," by Valeria Cavestany

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS


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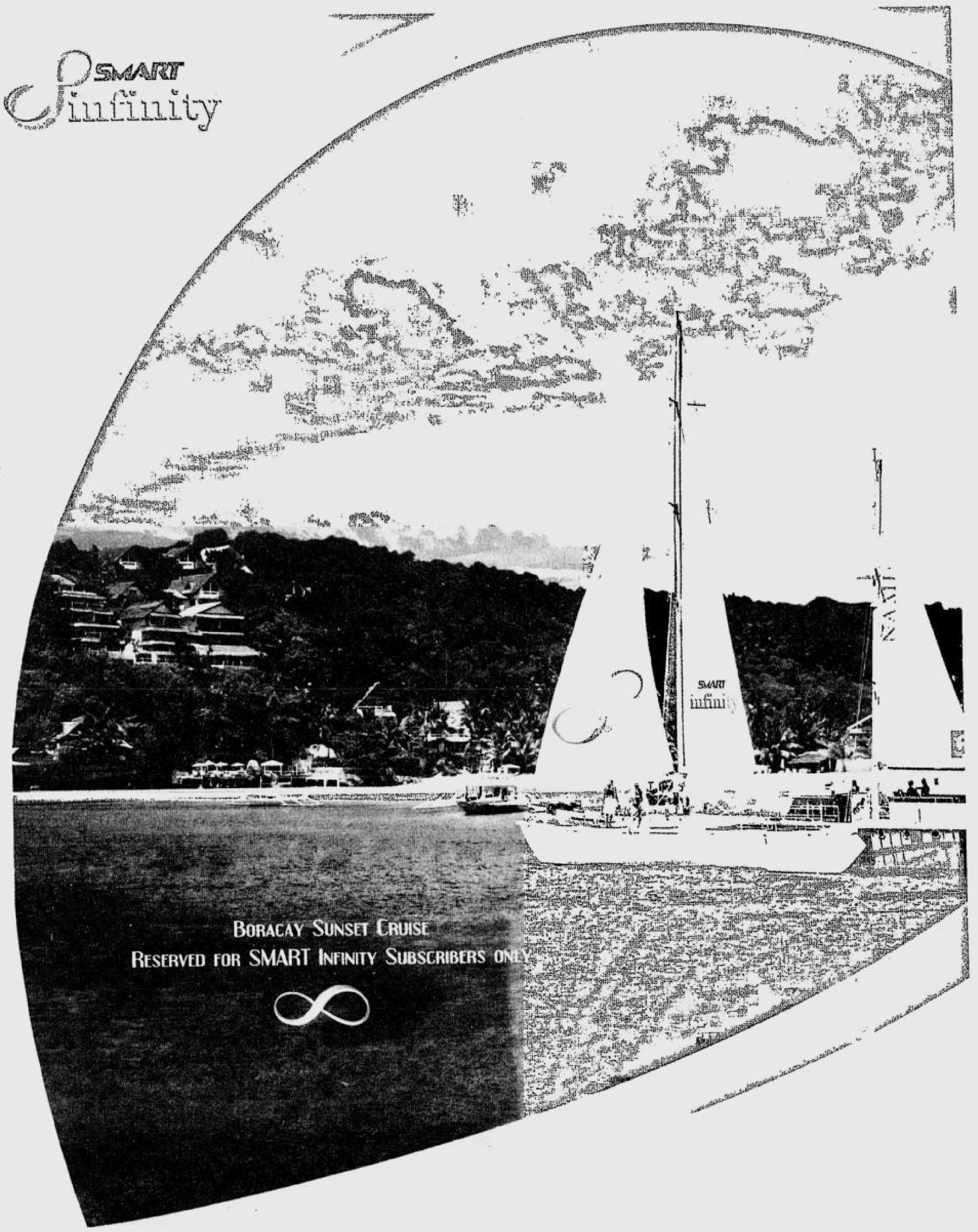

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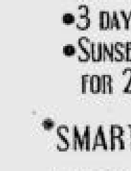

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VISUAL ARTS

Baldemor at Galerie Y

Manuel D. Baldemor presents his recent works in "The Wonders of China" in acrylic impasto, Feb. 16 at the Galerie Y, 3/L, Glorietta 4, Makati City. The exhibit features Chinese landscapes: the radiance of springtime; the bleakness of autumn; and the mistiness of winter.

Jumalon, Quirante at Blanc

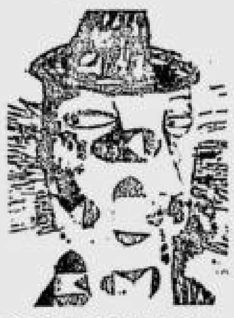
Blanc Art Space mounts "Untitled Stills," an exhibit of recent paintings and drawings by young artists Winner Jumalon and Ian Quirante. Jumalon photographs the interior of an empty house from the outside and translates it into a painting bordered by an actual window frame. Another painting portrays the scene outside the artist's house, as seen from inside through a window. Quirante explores drawing as "an act without restrictions, boundaries or rules." The texts and images on his canvases are influenced by the highly intuitive process of graffiti artists and the disjointed effect of Graffiti Art. The exhibit will open on Feb. 16. Blanc is at 2E Crown Tower, 107 H.V. de la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. Call 7520032 or 0920-9276436.

Indonesian artist at Ayala

Indonesian painter Sasya Tranggono presents "Feminine," Feb. 13-25 at the Artists' Space, 2/F, Glass Wing, Ayala Museum, Makati City. At first view, femininity pervades the general atmosphere of the works. At closer view, however, one sees the features that qualify Tranggono's paintings—softness of the pastel tomes, intimacy of the themes, emphasis on the interior scenes in her still-life works and the ubiquitous presence of flowers. Call 7577117 to 21 local 31.

Tapaya at Drawing Room

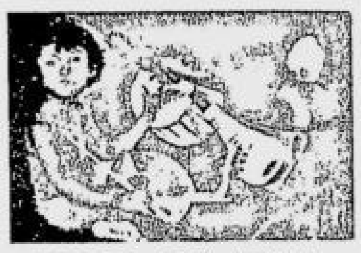
Rodel Tapaya presents "Mapapel," until March 3 at the Drawing Room, Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City. The exhibit features a series of works on paper that depict characters, scenes and various narratives. Figure and ground relationships are shown in the play of paper and media while mapping and finding meanings in a consortium of interrelated images. Call 8976990 or 8977877.



"ANG PAGLUBOG ng Bituing Makulit," by Rodel Tapaya

Ilonggo artists in group show

In celebration of the National Arts Month, 30 Ilonggo artists present "The Nude," Feb. 15-March 2, at the UPV Art Gallery, Iloilo City. The exhibit features paintings and sculptures with the artists' interpretations of the concept of nudity and their views on the human body as art subject. The exhibit is supported by the UPV Chancellor's Committee on Culture and the Arts and is curated by Martin Genodepa.



"TEARS for Spilled Milk," by Guijo Dueñas

Sena art pupils' show at Eastwood

The Fernando B. Sena Art workshop presents "Iba't-ibang Kamay, Sari-saring Kulay," a group exhibit by Myrna Santillan, Sylvia Buensuceso, Nini Gadia, Myrna Militante, Don Santana, Allan Fruelda, Poh Weng Chien, Miriam Daway, Honey Carandang, Ada Loredo, Angie Salanio, Felino Medina, Margie Garcia, Sarah Orendain, Seb Dy, Gaudencio Romion Jr., Martina Rosales, Ariston Torribio Fule, Alex Quison, Vergel de Dios, Lea Consulta, Joy de Jesus, Francis Nacion, Marlyn Aquino, Ruberna Quibal, Myra Picart, Jun Tuplano, Beth Sanders, Mike Herrera, Rudy Lunod, Andi Cubi, Ben Infante and Bob Estolas. The exhibit runs until Feb. 15 at the Cinema lobby, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City.

Cebu artists at Lemuria

Lemuria with Neo-Tribalism Movement Inc., presents an art exhibit by Cebuano artists Leopoldo Aguilar Jr., Ian Sanchez and Sherwin Carillo, Feb. 16 at 350 Protacio St., Lemuria Compound, Pasay City. The exhibit will showcase art performances, paintings, installation and live tribal performances by Bagong Tribo and Lemurian (outreach students of the Neo-Tribalism Movement Inc.). Call 0926-7467485.

Art lecture at Lopez

The Lopez Memorial Museum and First Generation Corporation present the art lecture "Do You See What I See: Optics and Its Implications on Display and Documentation," Feb. 17, 2-4 p.m. Renowned physicist Dr. Maricor Soriano will be the speaker. Call 6312417 for details.

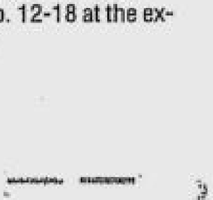
Ugu Bigyan pottery workshop at Temple Hill

Augusto "Ugu" Bigyan will hold a pottery workshop at Temple Hill International School on Feb. 15. A potter of almost two decades, Bigyan gets his inspiration from nature and the ideal rustic life he leads. His finely finished products are showcased in his *bahay probinsiya* cum studio-showroom in Tiaong, Quezon, as well as in Ayala Museum, Glorietta, Amanpulo and El Nido resorts. For both busy people and those with spare time, the workshop could be a chance to break away from routine or to de-stress. As Bigyan himself believes, creative work frees the mind and heart from worries; it's a form of therapy. Temple Hill blends a Montessori-based curriculum with special additional learning areas in music, arts and real-life activities such as farming and crafts. It is at Village East Executive Homes, Cainta, Rizal. Call 655-3260 or e-mail this_mshs@yahoo.com.

Orientalia at Shangri-La Plaza

Gallery 828, Old Asia and Bloomingdales will be having an exhibit of Oriental paintings, furniture, fabrics and décor on Feb. 12-18 at the exhibit area on 4/L, Shangri-La Plaza, Shaw Boulevard.

'Measures' at Finale



Opening on Feb. 15 at the Finale Art Gallery is "Measures" by Bembol de la Cruz. Unflinching in his portrayal of disorder and ruin and with an acute historical and political sense, the artist surveys the destructions that took place in the US, the Philippines and Lebanon among other places, examining how "measures," meant to promote order and stability, ironically inflict more harm than good. Positioned on the various sites of chaos on the canvas, the school-type rulers seem impotent in calibrating the enormity of loss. As a stroke of remembrance, the title of each painting is composed of numbers that came from the date of bombing and devastation of the specified place. "Measures" is curated by Roberto Chabet.

Art of the Chinese diaspora

From page C1

to Southeast Asia, specifically to the British and Dutch East Indies. These locally established Chinese societies that developed in the trading ports of Melaka, Singapore and Penang aligned themselves with the foreign powers. The public display of prestige goods reinforced their political and economic eminence.

"This material culture is the product of a syncretism which drew from the traditions of both China and Southeast Asia. Such objects of power and desire include jewelry, beaded slippers, embroidery, gold and silver ornaments, ceramics, garments and textiles, ceremonial ware and furniture."

Outflow and inflow

It is here that the outflow and inflow of Chinese culture begin. As Ocampo points out: "If you look at the Peranakan exhibit, we actually see this Chinese diaspora—Chinese going overseas. And if you remember some textbooks, at least to know that the Chinese have been with us since the 9th century... This exhibit is meant not only to show us their art but also to underscore those long links with China and to open our eyes to that Chinese influence which we often think is already ours but is actually from abroad."

Ocampo is curating the second section, "Tsinoy Art: Chinese Mestizo Culture in Colonial Times." As counterpart of the Peranakan exhibit, this one shows similar alliances between Chinese and Filipinos, which produced the Tsinoy culture with several parallel phenomena.

It features little-known artifacts or those traditionally regarded as simply 19th-century Philippine colonial art, including ivory and hardwood *santos*, jewelry, furniture, works by Tsinoy artisans.

"Chinese Trade Ware," curated by Rita Tan, features a comprehensive range of objects spanning a millennium of pottery from Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong and those from the kilns of Thailand, Cambodia, Burma and Japan.

PURISSIMA Concepcion in solid wood, Paulino and Hetty Que Collection

They come from the Roberto T. Villanueva Collection, considered one of the finest of its kind in the country. To be displayed are 200 of the collection's over 3,800 ceramic pieces.

In the section "Damian Domingo: The First Great Filipino Painter," religious images (from the Ongpin collection, previously unseen by the public), portrait miniatures and an album of Philippine costumes will be displayed to highlight the preeminence of this Chinese mestizo who is now recognized as the first great Filipino painter.

This will be curated by Luciano Santiago and two of the master portraitist's descendants, Lisa Ongpin-Periquet and Deanna Ongpin-Recto (through his great-grandson Alfonso T. Ongpin).

Contemporary discourse

The last two sections provide the "contemporary discourse on the country's Chinese heritage."

In "China Gaze," curated by Ditas Samson, Filipino-Basque artist Valeria Cavestany presents her collection of light boxes and acrylic portraits based on old glamour photographs of

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'Manila Now' focuses on Asian designs

THE CHAMBER OF FURNITURE INDUSTRY OF the Philippines (CFIP) will mount the "Manila Now" Philippine international furniture show at the World Trade Center and Philippine Trade and Training Center on Feb. 27-March 2. The CFIP presents this furniture and furnishings show annually.

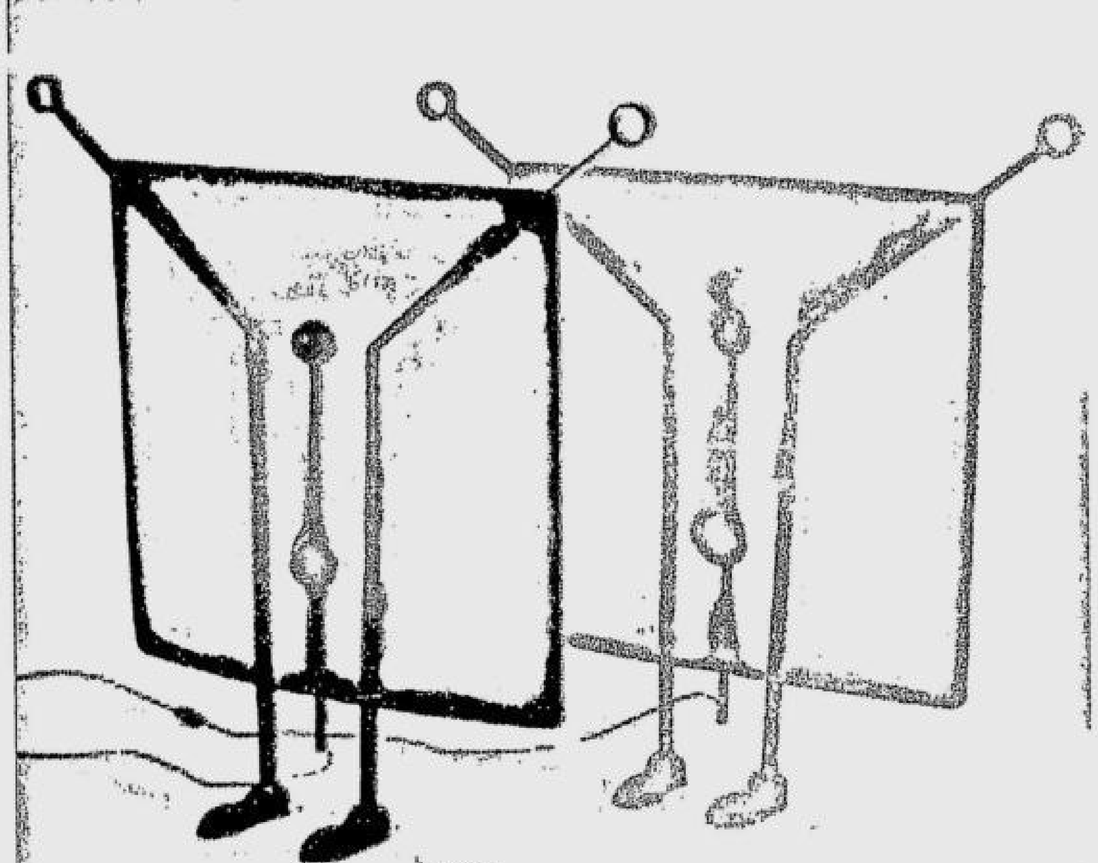
"Manila Now" was launched in 2006 as a five-year program that hinges primarily on the active participation of world-renowned designers. Italian architect/designer Gaetano Pesce, the featured international designer for 2007, gave a symposium on Oct. 11 at the PICC.

Pesce's extensive body of work is recognized for its emotive and tactile qualities, unrestrained use of color and innovative building materials developed through new technologies. The work has been described by the prominent architecture critic Herbert Muschamp as the "architectural equivalent of a brainstorm."

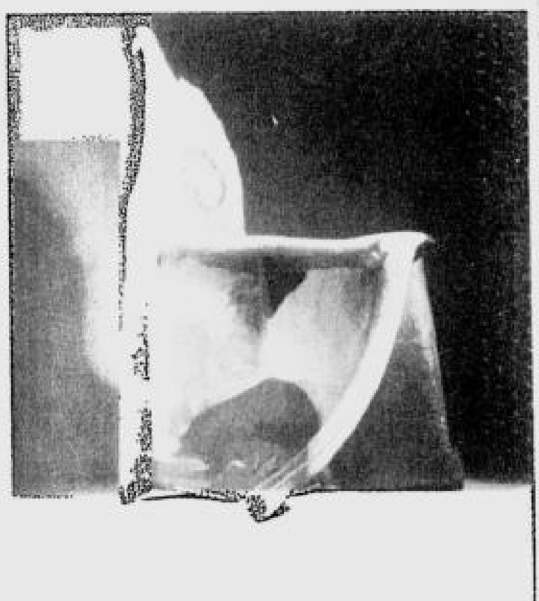
This year's edition will feature special settings showcasing Asia's great design minds and the country's flora as a world-class tourist destination.

An outreach feature for the public is the Experts Forum, a series of lectures on marketing, branding, design, to be held 1:30 p.m. daily. Speakers are Unesco commissioner Virginia Moreno ("Design in Philippine Culture," Feb. 27); architect and city planner Felino A. Palafox Jr. ("Hospitality Industry and Contract Projects," Feb. 28); and Emily Altomonte-Abrera of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and McCann Erickson ("Branding," March 1).

"Manila Now" will be open to trade buyers and professionals (architects, interior designers, building contractors) 9 a.m.-6 p.m. daily. It will be open to the public and students at 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on March 2. Visit www.manilanow.ph or e-mail manilanow@cfip.org.ph.



SALVATORE Large Open Sky



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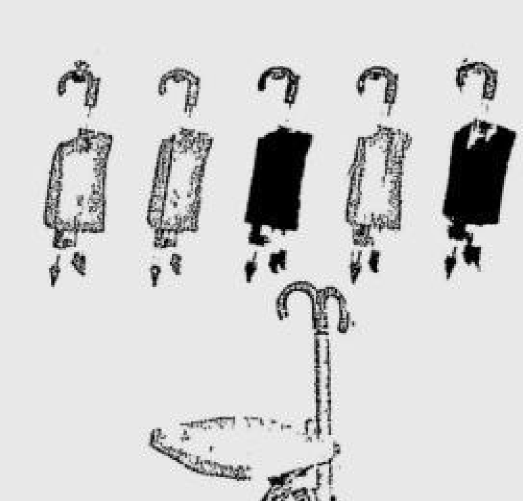

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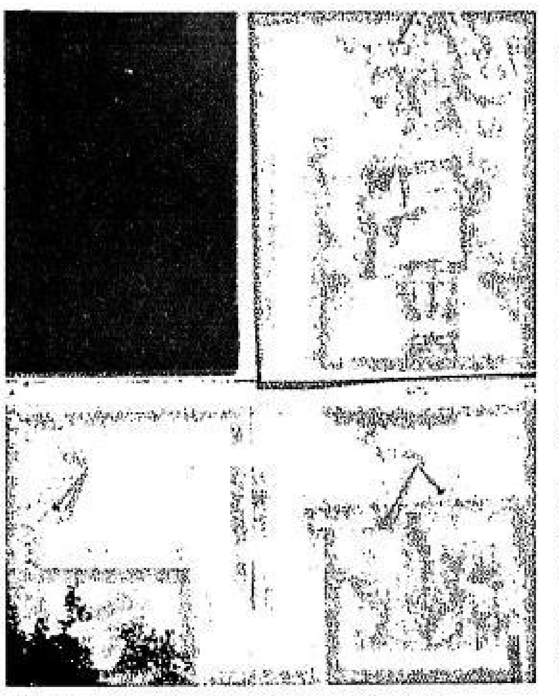

DETAIL from Claudine Sia's installation "Evidence Bags"

GOLD peacock belt, Asian Civilisations Museum (on loan from Edmond Chin)

Hong Kong and Shanghai women.

"Evidence Bags," curated by Rina Adapon and the only section mounted on the ground-floor gallery, is a floor-to-ceiling installation by Filipino-Chinese artist Claudine Sia. It consists of old photographs, postcards, claim stubs and other ephemera placed in small translucent paper bags and fixed with long steel pins on a panel, alternating with rectangles of glassine.

Says the artist: "More than anything else, this work is about photography, memory and history. Without them, all our family stories would be called into question—they would be merely legends or myths. Photographs are proofs."

The whole show then is both celebration and homage: "to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of syncretic Chinese cultures in Southeast Asia, achievements that significantly contribute to the formation and imagining of nation in the present-day countries of Singapore and the Philippines, paying homage to their ultimate source—the ancient civilization of China."

WATER dropper, Roberto T. Villanueva Collection

New condo guide

THE LATEST ISSUE OF CONDO Central contains a full guide on buying condominiums, from location to the types of condo spaces.

With the comprehensive guide is an A-list of new developments in pre-selling stage, including Ayala Land's Residences at Greenbelt, Megaworld's Manhattan Garden, and Philtown's Metropolitan.

G&W's Sapphire Residences appears on the cover as it introduces the innovative Build To Own system, a unique condo-building scheme that cuts total cost by 40 percent and lets buyers become co-project managers of their own units.

For its Woman on Top, Condo Central features educator and entrepreneur Nelia Sarcol and her "bachelorette's pad" at the Tower One of the Columns at Ayala.

Condo Central also provides tips on making condo spaces grow and decorating living spaces for the summer.

A special feature is Well Nest, which covers spas, scents, and Zen-inspired home décor.

Condo Central Magazine is published monthly by Condo.Com.Ph and is available nationwide. Call 812-3333.

Celebrate with Shows Galore at the Araneta Coliseum

Bask in the romantic shows lined up at the Coliseum with no less than the world's top balladeer, **Cliff Richard**, in his Here and Now 2007 Tour, on February 18 and '80s greats **Paul Williams and Dennis Lambert** on Valentine's Day, February 14.

Be enthralled at the **Thrills of Spring :** Grand Acrobatic Show on February 18.

Catch the Showgirl **Ms. Vina Morales,** in her repeat concert on the 24th at 8:00pm.

Celebrate The Chinese Spring Festival at Araneta Center malls and usher in the Year of the Fire Boar with a big BANG!

★ **Chinese Blockbuster Films** at the Ateneo Spring Film Festival, Gateway Cineplex 10 – February 15-18

★ Shop for authentic Chinese items at the **Gateway Chinese Bazaar,** Level 4 -- February 16 - 25

★ **Dragon and Lion Dance Performances**
- Chinese Bazaar, Feburary 16
- All day, all malls, February 17

★ **Asian Cooking Demos** by Center for Culinary Arts, Gateway Chinese Bazaar, Level 4, February 17

★ **Feng Shui Fundamentals and 2007 Forecast** from World of Feng Shui President, Ms. Marites Alen at 11am, Gateway Chinese Bazaar, Level 4, February 18

★ Feast your eyes during the **Parade of Beauties** on February 25 with official candidates of the Bb. Pilipinas

So celebrate at the Araneta Center, the ultimate haven of world-class shopping, dining and superb entertainment. Together, let's celebrate this romance-filled month while welcoming the Year of the Fire Boar – you can't afford to miss all the revelry. It's the only place to be.

February Celebration at Araneta Center

WE HAVE MORE THAN JUST THE BIGGEST STARS IN THE MOST ROMANTIC CELEBRATION OF LOVE IN THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

AT THE COLISEUM

FEBRUARY 13 TUE/8PM
CLIFF RICHARD
HERE AND NOW TOUR 2007
ARANETA COLISEUM

FEBRUARY 14 WED/8PM
PAUL WILLIAMS & DENNIS LAMBERT
THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGWRITERS SERIES
ARANETA COLISEUM

FEBRUARY 18 SUN/[illegible]
THRILLS OF SPRING
GRAND ACROBATIC SHOW
ARANETA COLISEUM

FEBRUARY 24 SAT/8PM
VINA MORALES
SHOWGIRL: THE REPEAT
ARANETA COLISEUM

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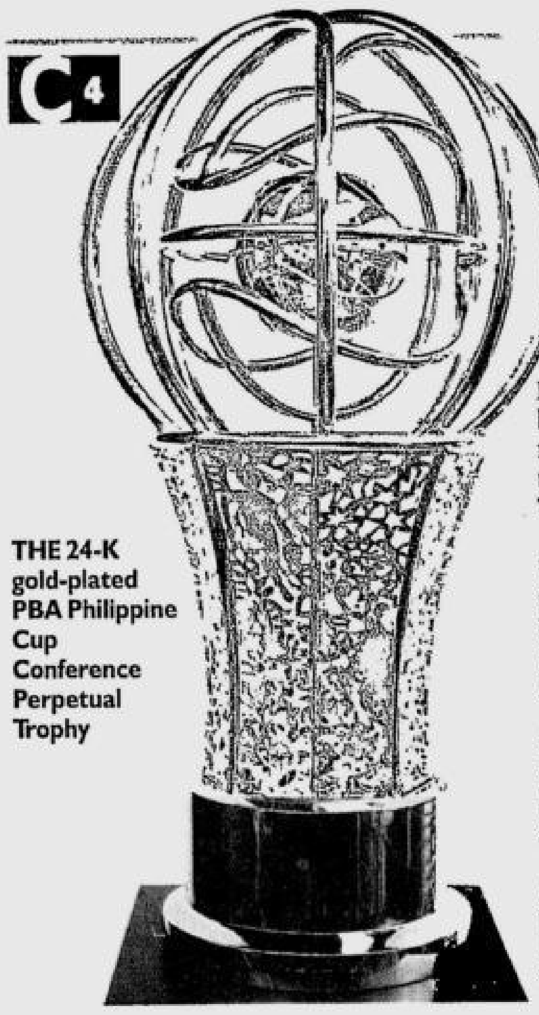
New Orlina sculpture a trophy in itself



THE 24-K gold-plated PBA Philippine Cup Conference Perpetual Trophy

LAST OCTOBER, THE PHILIPPINE BASKETball Association (PBA) commissioned renowned sculptor Ramon Orlina to design the PBA Philippine Cup Conference Perpetual Trophy.

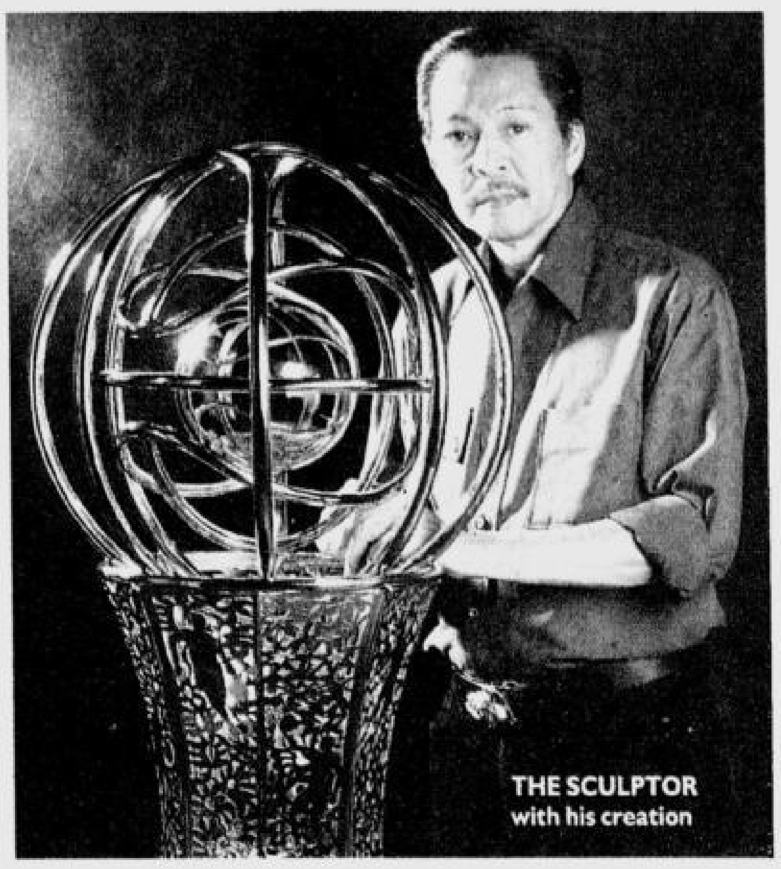
The trophy is meant to be passed on like a torch and surrendered like a crown by a previous year's champion to the present year's winner. A team that wins the championship for three consecutive years brings it home for good.

Sports has been part of Orlina's artmaking ever since he won the first prize in sculpture category of the II International Biennale of Basketball in the Arts in Madrid, Spain, in the year 2000.

Orlina has now created another work of art that resonates Filipino team spirit, athletic endurance and fair play. The trophy encapsulates the nation's national sport and passion—basketball.

A 24-karat gold-plated frame stands as the ring and acts as a support for the orb inside, a 24-karat gold-plated sphere reflecting the spiraling steel design on its surface, evoking the grooves of a basketball from all angles. Seeming to be perfectly afloat at the center is the optical illusion of a golden basketball—the object of aspiration of any competitor.

The global yet proudly Filipino trophy has distinct local elements such as the net underneath the ring, comprised of eight panels with four designs reflecting their counterparts on the other side. It is made of brass and also fully gold-plated on either side. Reminiscent of the intricately crafted *pastillas de leche* wrappings, its patterns depict the Pinoy basketball hero in action—dribbling, dunking, eye-on-the-prize and flying high. Indeed, the sweetness of hard-earned victory can be likened to that little rolled-up native delicacy.



THE SCULPTOR with his creation

At the base is a vast span of stainless steel—awaiting the record of basketball team legends to be engraved on it for seasons to come.

Like a true victor's game, everything is polished: stainless steel will not tarnish, gold plate will last for years. In the spirit of Orlina's trademark mirror effect, even without glass, everything reflects on the sparkling exteriors purposefully.

This trophy represents the season's end, the PBA tournament's fitting goal, because the glittering trophy is, after all, the aspirants' aim. Vying for the championship in the 2006-2007 season are sister teams San Miguel Beer and Barangay Ginebra. The third place is contested by Red Bull and Talk 'N' Text.

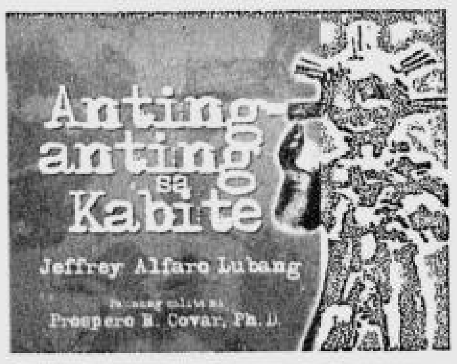
National writers workshop offers fellowships

THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE Writing and Studies of the University of Santo Tomas is accepting manuscripts for the 8th National Writers Workshop to be held on April 29-May 5 in Baguio City.

The workshop is open to writers who have not been awarded fellowships to any national writers workshop.

An applicant should submit three printed copies (on short bond paper) and a CD or diskette containing soft copies in MS Word format of his/her manuscript (at least five poems or two short stories or five nonfiction pieces in English or Filipino). He/she should submit a resume, a 2 x 2 ID photo, and a certification duly signed by an institution/company senior that the manuscript is authentic.

Fifteen fellowships are available, a percentage of which will be given to the Dominican Network of Schools, Colleges and Universities. Deadline is on Feb. 23. Interested parties may call 4061611 local 8281 (Tuesday to Saturday) or e-mail aldimalanta@gmail.com.



New books on Cavite culture

THREE BOOKS ON CAVITE WERE launched recently by the Cavite Studies Center of De La Salle University-Dasmarinas as its second batch of publications this school year.

"Anting-Anting sa Kabite" by Prof. Jeffrey Lubang reflects the cultural beliefs of local folk regarding amulets or charms. It also features the province's semi-legendary personalities such as Nardong Putik, Bianong Bulag and Mayor Gulapa who were believed to possess the charms.

"Pandarayuhan" cites the influences of inward and outward population movements in Cavite on the economic, social and cultural life of its people; while "The Modernization of Cavite" records the province's attempt toward economic development particularly from the postwar era up to the present.

The books are supported by the Cavite Historical Society headed by former prime minister Cesar Virata and ex-Sen. Vicente Paterno; former governor Juanito Remulla and incumbent governor Ireneo Malicsi; National Scientist Dr. Paulo Campos and former Imus Institute president Manuel Paredes.

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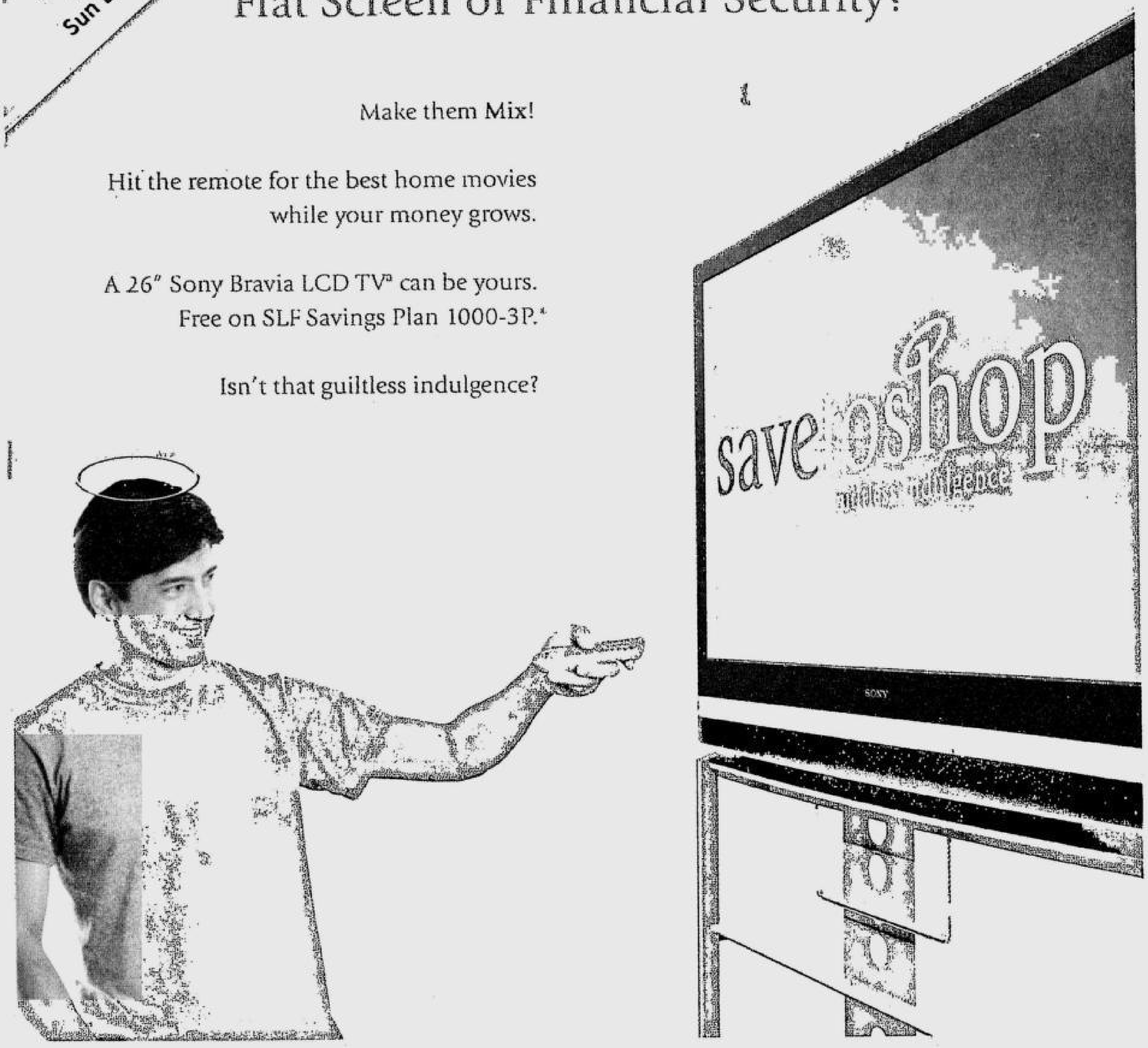

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ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Wages of love in the performing arts

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

LONG BEFORE I STARTED TO actively cover the performing arts, I saw a film whose absurd highlight I thought could only happen in the movies.

This movie had an outrageous opera scene where the stage set got disentangled before the gala opening which had been much anticipated by a well-dressed crowd.

But in another highlight of the movie, this buxom soprano was shown riding, à la rodeo, her love object, a young hunk lying helpless on the floor. She was hitting the high notes while astride the man.

I suppressed my amusement at the scene and innocently told myself, "This can only happen in the movies."

WAGES/ D3

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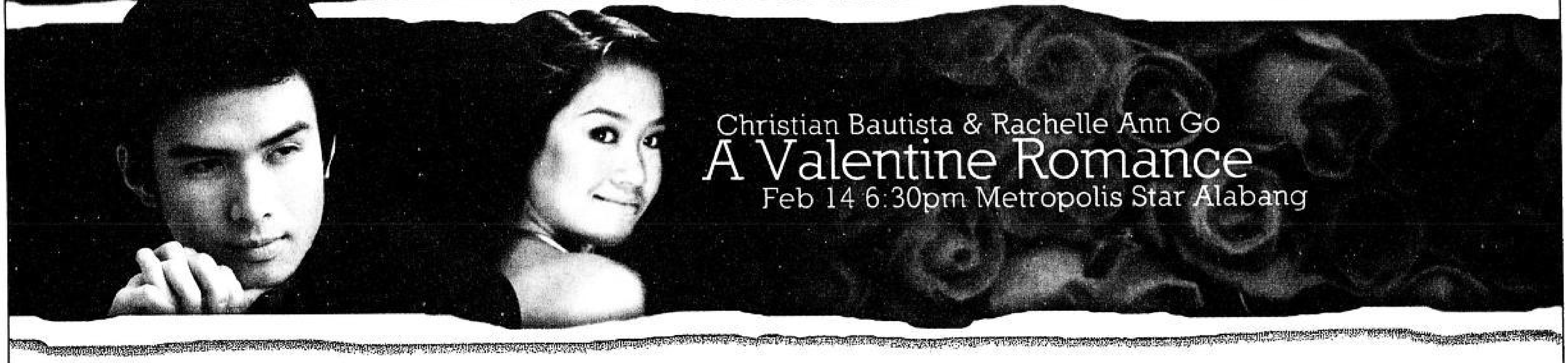
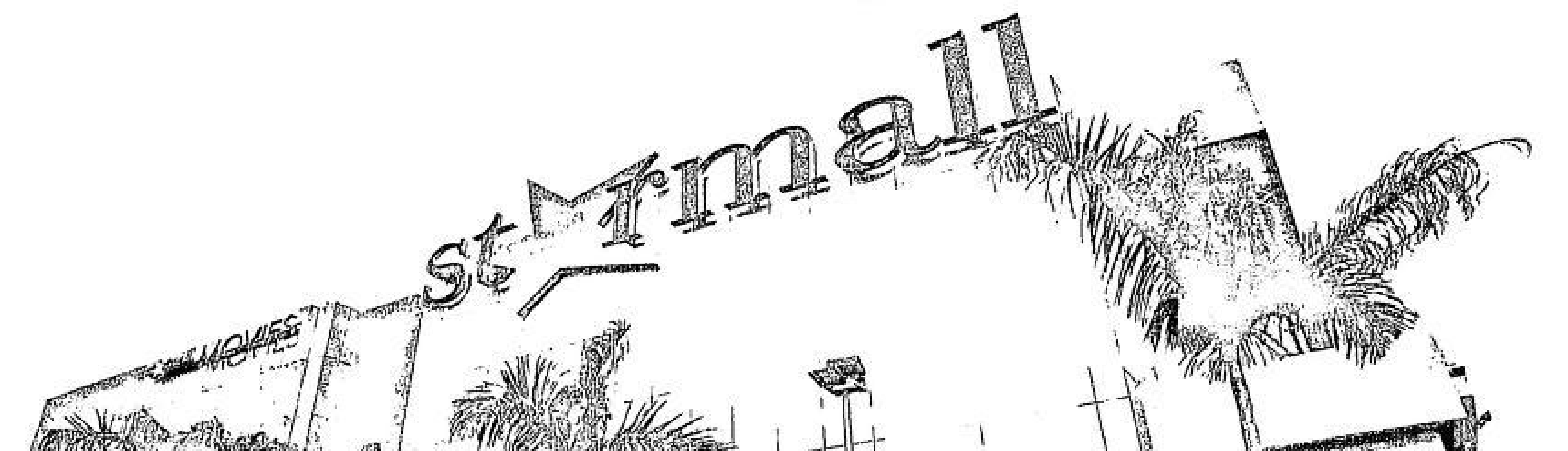
Jolina Magdangal & Session Road
Songs of Love
Feb 13 5pm Starmall EDSA Shaw

Jacqui Magno, Janet Basco & Leah Navarro
Love Beyond Time
Feb 14 7pm Starmall Las Piñas


Christian Bautista & Rachelle Ann Go
A Valentine Romance
Feb 14 6:30pm Metropolis Star Alabang

Fall in Love with the STARS



METROPOLIS STAR ALABANG

Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue
February 17 & 24	2pm	Pangkabuhayan Free Workshop	3L
February 18	10am	Dragon & Lion Dance Show and Psychic Fest	3L
February 19-28	1pm	Home Center presents Bedroom Ideas	3L
February 23	4pm	Ani ng Sining, Yaman ng Lahi, Philippine Arts Festival 2007	2L
February 25	4pm	Muntinlupa Arts and Theatrical Dance Invasion	2L

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays: Live Band, 8pm, 2/L

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Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue
February 17	7pm	SMB Street Party	Open Parking
February 18	1pm	Dragon Dance Show and Psychic Fest	Mall Area
February 18	4pm	NCCA Lola Basyang Stage Play	2L

Mondays: Comedy Nights at The Strip, 7pm
Wednesdays: Acoustic Nights at The Strip, 8pm
Fridays & Saturdays: Live Bands at Marks Bar, 8pm

starmall EDSA SHAW

Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue
February 17	4pm	National Arts Month, "Ani ng Sining" with Noel Cabangon and Anima	2/L
February 17	4pm	SMB Street Party	Open Parking
February 18	1pm	Dragon and Lion Dance Show, Wushu Exhibition Incense Blessing and Psychic Fest	2/L
February 24	4pm	Fashion Moves & Style by Nephite Entertainment Production	2/L
February 25	4pm	Lovi Poe Mall Tour	2/L

Tuesdays: Stand-Up Comedy at Cuba Libre, 9pm
Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays: Live Band at Cuba Libre, 9pm

An evening of promise

By Elka Krystle R. Requinta
Contributor

IN HIS BOOK "BALLERINA," author Edward Stewart calls Ludwig Minkus' ballet compositions "pure Minkus drivel" because of the same throbbing, out-of-theme strings and harp used in more than two of the famed composer's works.

But as New York-based Carlos Garcia of Les Ballet Grandiva joined some promising young ballerinas and danseurs in the "An Evening of Minkus" at Le Pavillion last week, the familiar strings actually served as a well-received grandiose accompaniment to a promising future—and additional funding—for Philippine dance.

MINKUS Gala opening

DON Quixote pas de deux

CARLOS Garcia

Garcia, formerly of the internationally acclaimed Les Ballet Trockaderos (an all-male touring group dancing both female and male roles in classical ballet), was all chili powder and olé as female lead Kitri in the "Don Quixote pas de deux." His small but well-toned frame exuded strength and vibrance as he gracefully pirouetted across the stage in other variations, including "Le Corsaire."

Partnering Garcia was Barny Baris from Ballet Philippines, whose boyish charm and brawny stance valiantly supported Garcia in their scenes.

Up-and-coming twinkle-toed ballerinas Bianca Trocino, Marielle Alonzo, Madge Reyes, Nica Ylagan and Kelly Go gave off illusions of length and mature finesse (dancers' age range 13-24), while future danseur nobles Barny Baris, Marvin Ryan Arizo, Peter San Juan, Benjie Ella Jr., Emmanuelle Guillermo and Mark Joseph Pineda soared in barreling turns and big jumps in their solo and group variations.

Pride

Surely, the young dancers' lyrical executions in both the Minkus classical gala and the special interpretation of Richard Tan's "Dalagang Pilipina" and Pachelbel's "Silhouette" made their respective schools and dance companies (Steps Dance Studio, Radaic School of Ballet and Philippine Ballet Theater) swell with pride. They underwent rigorous a five-month training with Garcia after passing auditions among hopefuls from other schools in Manila.

Garcia said training the dancers and performing with them is a way of sharing his blessings.

Adeptly skilled in performing both male and female roles, he urged dance hopefuls to "look beyond their gender and focus more on honing their talent and perfecting their craft."

Just raising funds

The well-attended "An Evening of Minkus" is a pioneer fundraising activity of the Philippine National Association of Ballet dancers (PNAB), a neophyte dance foundation formed late last year to send "poor but deserving" dancers in more ballet-focused places abroad to join competitions and workshops.

"There are plenty of talented, highly skilled dancers stuck here in the country who cannot pursue their craft because it is too expensive for them," said Cynthia Reyes, one of PNAB's board trustees. "We would like to be able support and sustain these kind of dancers as we hope they would come back and impart what they've learned."

Jackie Go, who spearheaded the foundation with her husband, Wilson Go (of FabTech Industrial Inc.), is quick to clarify that PNAB does not intend to compete with local dance companies. In fact, Go said, PNAB hopes for the companies' support for future fundraising productions by joining the auditions that will be open to dancers nationwide.

"We just want to raise funds that could eventually help everybody (in the dance industry)," Go said.

It is hoped PNAB would get the cooperation of dance schools and companies, as well get stronger support from the business sector to achieve the common goal of improving the state of ballet in the Philippines and entrenching its culture deeper among Filipinos.

CARLOS Garcia in "Le Corsaire"

SILHOUETTE

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IN CINEMAS FEBRUARY 14 (WEDNESDAY)

GRUPO Centro Flamenco

Flamenco fires up Valentine

FUNDACION CENTRO Flamenco will stage a Valentine dance concert on Feb. 16 and 17 at the Music Museum in Greenhills.

"Pasion y Fuego" will feature Lucy Torres Gomez, Angel Gomez, Emma Estrada, Marien Gomez Lizares and the Hotlegs group together with Grupo Centro Flamenco dancers, Yerbaguena, Jay Glorioso and Antonio Soria from Malaga. Leo Rialp is stage director with lights design by Shoko Matsumoto and Roman Cruz.

"Pasion y Fuego" is the embodiment of all that is flamenco—passion and fire. Emma Estrada, founding president of Centro Flamenco, will present her works "Martinete," "Alegrias," "Tango Argentino," a flamenco fusion piece, and a special choreography "La Rosa" presenting Lucy Torres Gomez with the Hotlegs.

Other dances by Cecile de Joya will also be performed by Grupo Centro Flamenco. "Pasion y Fuego" promises a night of pulsating dances, Spanish guitars and captivating music.

Tickets are available at Ticketworld and Music Museum and at Centro Flamenco. Call 7512243.

LUCY Torres Gomez

Sudoku smackdown Feb. 17

SUDOKU IS SIMPLY ONE OF THE HOTTEST puzzle games in the world these days, attracting legions of fans who have found a better way to pass idle time and sharpen their minds.

PowerBooks launches its first Sudoku tournament called "Sudoku Smackdown" in Powerbooks Greenbelt 4 on Feb. 17, 1-5 p.m.

Winners will take home hot gadgets from Red Fox, MSI and Genius, and can further hone their puzzle-solving skills with free Sudoku Samurai magazine subscriptions and giveaways.

The contest is divided into Junior (ages 10-17) and Senior (ages 18 and above) divisions. To join, register at the customer service counter of any PowerBooks branch before Feb. 17. Registration is free and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Only 40 slots are available for each division. There will be two elimination rounds and one final showdown for both divisions.

Powercard and Powercard Plus holders who will sign up and participate in the tournament will earn 500 bonus points in their account.

PowerBooks Specialty Store is a complete one-stop bookstore with branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta 3 (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25), Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334, 5243448), Mall of Asia (5560244), and Festival Supermall (8508221).

'History Boys' succeeds as both stage and film

By Eldric Paul A. Peredo
Contributor

RUSSELL TOVEY, Samuel Anderson, James Corden, Andrew Knott, Dominic Cooper, Samuel Barnett, Jamie Parker and Sacha Dhawan

A PLAY
BY ALAN BENNETT
The HistoryBoys

IT'S A PLOT NO ONE WOULD EVEN second-glance. A rowdy bunch of boys who have posted unprecedented grades in a little-known public high school are made to stay an extra term to prepare for the entrance exams into the most prestigious universities.

Against all odds, they are inspired to overcome every challenge by an eccentric roster of teachers. The rest is history.

That's "The History Boys," the film version of the play of the same title written by Alan Bennett and originally essayed by Britain's National Theater and directed by Nicholas Hytner in 2004. It also had a successful Broadway run.

Hytner repeats as director in the film version.

Cutler's Grammar School's Crowther, Posner, Dakin, Timms, Akthar, Lockwood, Scripps and Rudge (Samuel Anderson, Samuel Barnett, Dominic Cooper, James Corden, Sacha Dhawan, Andrew Knott, Jamie Parker and Russell Tovey, respectively) have marks that could possibly get them college education in Britain's two most prestigious universities—Oxford and Cambridge.

The results-oriented headmaster (played by Clive Merrison), however, considers them too rough around the edges, and hires young Oxford grad Irwin (Stephen Campbell Moore) to reinforce the tutorship provided by the unconventional General Studies teacher Hector (Griffiths) and traditional History teacher Mrs. Lintott (De la Tour).

While Mrs. Lintott rapid-fires historical facts, Hector's method is too undefined. The conflict becomes apparent when Irwin tries to elicit an out-of-the-box kind of thinking from the literature-quoting bunch that would get them past the "Oxbridge" exams.

Loyalties are tested, and so are teaching ethics, especially as the central characters of Hector and Irwin, for all the effectiveness of their apparently opposing styles have on the students, are revealed to be all too human, far from the idols that good teachers can turn out to be.

Refined portrayals

Perhaps it is because the film was made in between tours of the play that the actors, who reprise their roles on film, deliver such refined portrayals.

Filming was done right after the National Theater run and before the show went on tour and to Broadway. Especially for the young actors who play the "Boys," no one had time to get out of character; the interim was an extra term as far as the production was concerned.

The result is a fine-tuned lineup that doesn't flinch even before an all-seeing camera. The emotions and situations are believably real, and the dialogue comparable to your day-to-day teenage-boy classroom chitchat consisting of future success, sports, sex and sexual orientation, the relevance of religion, and more confident talk about sex.

The storyline is, in fact, punctuated by cusswords and toe-lining of sexual ethics, especially with Dakin, the self-confessed Casanova available to all sexual orientations, and Hector's relatively open secret of being attracted to his wards.

THE BOYS with their heavyweight counterparts Moore, Griffiths and De la Tour; (above left) Richard Griffiths and Stephen Campbell Moore

Posner, on the other hand, struggles to outgrow what he believes to be a homosexual phase, but is hard-put to the task what with Dakin around. Risque, but all that is precisely what makes the story real.

Bennett has maintained most of the material from the play, with only a few snips and additions here and there to suit the translation into film. A theater feel remains, but then, the case is the same in every other adaptation.

This is especially felt when Mrs. Lintott, whose sobriety of character holds the rest of the cast and story together, "recalls" the lives of the boys near the movie's end.

"The History Boys" is as normal and unstriking as a school setting can get. The young actors deliver their lines as if they did not have to memorize anything. The teenage actors perform like teenage boys, speaking uncouth language and clashing with one another over personal differences.

Finally, it's a group of teachers trying to make personal sense out of the life of otherwise brilliant boys they are trying to guide, and their own influence on the latter's choices.

The focus, therefore, is on the characters. No frills, no action, but no unduly extended "After the Sunset"/"Sunrise" discourses, either. The idle balance works.

The "Boys" makes for a good study in life-definitions, possibly even in the search for personal heroes; these are experiences any of us could have gone through at one point or another, providing us a template on what we have become.

Wages of love in the performing arts

From page D1

Now, I think that the movie was rather tame in portraying Eros in the arts.

An international wire agency recently reported that traces of dried semen were detected backstage and even on the curtains of the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

So, could wild things actually happen in the temple of the arts?

Three decades of covering the performing arts has convinced me that people in the arts are as human and vulnerable as those in fashion, politics and movies.

Which means that anything can happen after the rehearsal and performance of a Brahms symphony, the opening night of "Carmina Burana," the cast party of "The Bald Soprano" and an evening of "Madama Butterfly."

Not all the filmmakers in the world can fully capture the daring, the excitement, the jealousy, the envy, bitterness and the ecstasy of people in the arts.

The hushed love affairs between a trumpet player and a pianist, a stage director and an actor, a conductor and arts promoter, an actress and a lady diplomat are enough to keep Regal and Seiko films busy.

Controversial couple

For instance, I admire this couple who defied Manila's social conventions in the '40s and the '50s by leaving their spouses and be together.

The woman was a famous coloratura soprano and the man was a dashing tenor with the build and possibly the voice of Alfredo Kraus. Both were dedicated artists (she was teaching music until the day she died a few years back).

After their teaching hours, they would let me hear earlier recordings of their "La Traviata" duets together, and for once I realized what ignited their passion for each other. It's the common love for music and possibly the shared hopelessness of each other's failed marriages.

During those years, when I listened to her Mad Scene from "Lucia di Lammermoor," the soprano confided how her own marriage broke up. Her husband wasn't interested in her singing and was nowhere around on opening nights.

To make things worse, they didn't have a child of their own.

The diva confided to me she was incapable of bearing a child. She had a defective ovary, she told me. I thought that was providential because, as her fate dictated, she was destined to be handmaid of music and not to be goddess of fertility.

Artists and biology

You should know what artists go through to cope with their biological cycle.

Ballerinas aspiring to do "Swan Lake" and "Giselle" try to avoid pregnancy. Ditto with divas, especially on the year they intend to sing "Traviata" or "Aida."

Tenors shun the good life (i.e., drinking, late nights and junk food) just to be fit for "La Boheme" or "Otello."

Many forego marriage to avoid conflicts between marriage and career.

There's a classic statement from a celebrated pianist who discovered that her husband had been two-timing her on the eve of a Bonn recital: "I don't need a husband to be happy in this life. I only need my music."

A Filipina with an international singing career had wanted to have a baby. But by the time she became an incomparable interpreter of art songs, it was too late to fulfill her biological wish.

Eros and the strange ways in which he operates in the arts circle are materials for another version of Roman Polanski's "The Tenant" and "Bitter Moon."

Gay and lesbian affairs

In the theater world, for instance, many still cannot believe that a promising playwright-actor had left his wife for a man.

At one time, a prizewinning pianist confided to me that his wife left him for a woman, but that it was a very cordial separation. "The separation was good for me," the pianist said, "because my wife was quite open about it. My ex-wife's problem was how to bring it up to her parents, who she was sure would be shocked by the real cause of our separation."

From another source, I learned why a former prodigy was no longer as passionate about her music as she used to. She married a husband who was into pop music and violently jealous of her classical music and irritated by the rigorous rehearsals she did before a performance. In a fit of jealousy, he grabbed a hammer and struck the hands of his pianist-wife. After that incident, she turned to another instrument.

Love and lust, ambition and greed, resurrection and a genuine veneration for the arts mold the artists in ways strange and unknown to many.

For the study of Bach and Beethoven, Chekhov and Shakespeare, is intertwined with Jung and Freud, and the hands of Eros may strike before and after curtain call and long after the most captious critic has made her or his verdict on opening night.

Tomescu program

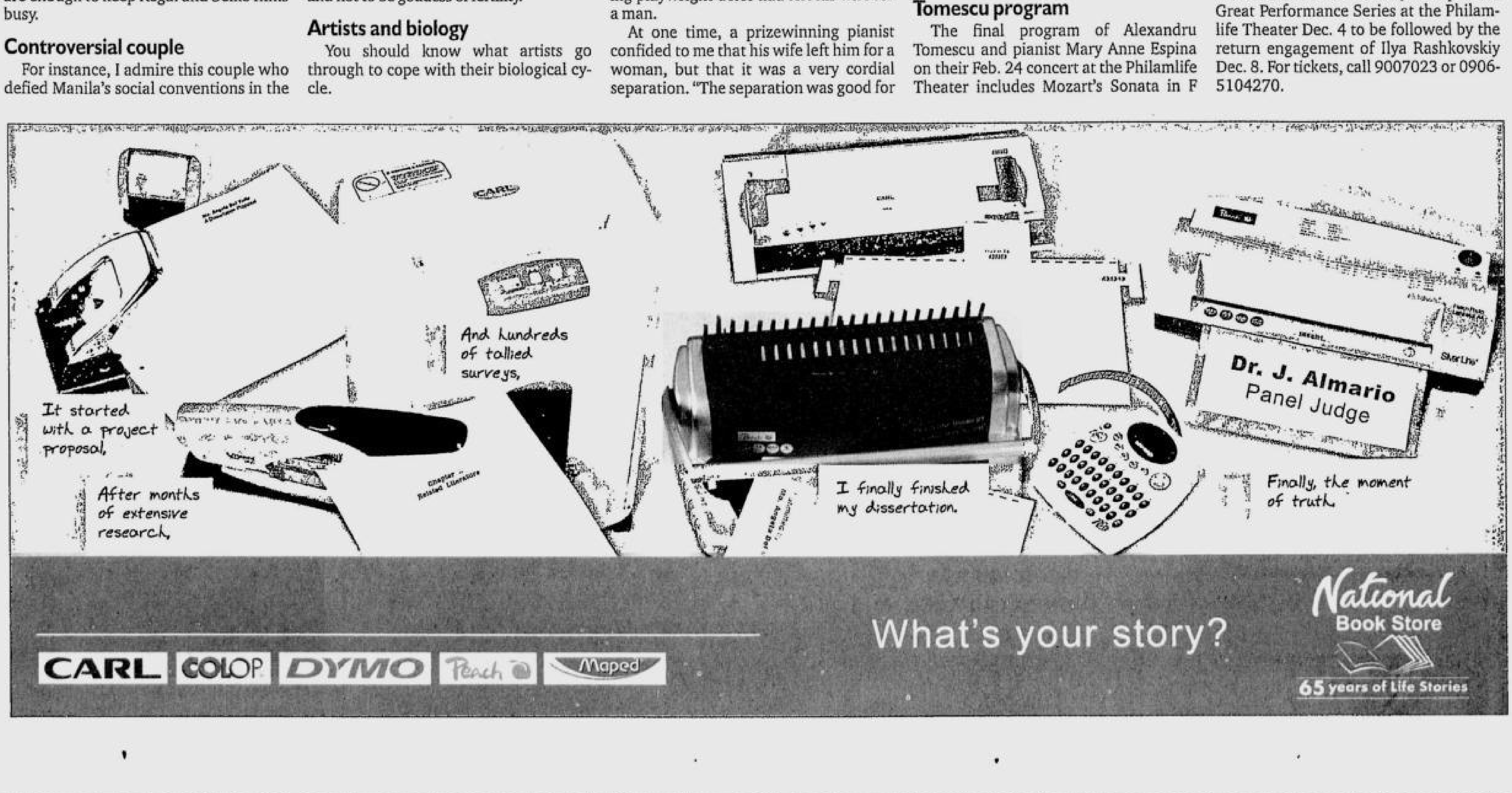
The final program of Alexandru Tomescu and pianist Mary Anne Espina on their Feb. 24 concert at the Philamlife Theater includes Mozart's Sonata in F Major, K 376, Brahms' Sonata No. 2 in A Major; Mozart's Adagio in E Major; Saint-Saens' Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Rachmaninoff's Vocalise and Paganini's "La Campanela."

The concert sponsored by the Philippine American Life Insurance Company and Manila Pavilion Hotel will also be repeated at the Nueva Ecija Convention Center in Palayan City Feb. 26 under the auspices of the Provincial Government of Nueva Ecija under Gov. Tomas Joson III, and in Bacolod City March 1 at the Governor's Hall in the Provincial Capitol.

The Bacolod concert is one of the highlights of the National Arts Fair of the Negros Cultural Foundation and the National Commission on Culture and the Arts. For tickets to the Manila and Bacolod concerts of Tomescu, call 9007023 or 0906-5104270.

Alvaro Pierri

Classical guitarist Alvaro Pierri, gold medalist in the 18th International Guitar Competition in France and first-prize winner of two other guitar competitions in Buenos Aires and Brazil, will open the Great Performance Series at the Philamlife Theater Dec. 4 to be followed by the return engagement of Ilya Rashkovskiy Dec. 8. For tickets, call 9007023 or 0906-5104270.


It started with a project proposal,
After months of extensive research,
And hundreds of tallied surveys,
I finally finished my dissertation.
Dr. J. Almario
Panel Judge
Finally, the moment of truth.
What's your story?
CARL COLOP DYMO Peach Maped
National Book Store
65 years of Life Stories

Saga of the campus press

UST Varsitarian marks 80th year with history exhibit

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

PABLO T. ANIDO MUST HAVE BEEN A Renaissance man. A medical student at the University of Santo Tomas during the 1920s, he was also a writer, violinist—and boxer. In fact, he went on to become the first editor in chief of the Varsitarian, the official student publication of UST, in 1928.

The honor of being "Father of the Varsitarian," however, goes to the famous José Villa Panganiban, for it was he who persevered in putting together the fledgling school paper—which later won many awards—and helping ensure its survival. Panganiban was a linguist who later served as director of the National Language Institute; in 1972 he published the landmark "Diksyunaryo Tesauro-Pilipino-Ingles."

The other founders were Elizabeth C. Bowers and Olimpia Baltazar, a granddaughter of, no less, the poet Balagtas (Francisco Baltazar).

The Varsitarian is now celebrating its 80th year with a retrospective exhibit at the UST Museum (open Tuesday-Friday; tel. 7811815), ongoing until Feb. 15. "Actually it's only our 79th year," Varsitarian features editor Mary Joy T. de Lara says. "But we decided to hold an advance show because there will be so many events in 2008, the actual 80th year."

FATHER ARCEO and Lumbera tour the exhibit. Jullie Yap-Daza (right) poses before a picture of her as a student editor.

VARSITARIAN alumni assist UST rector Fr. Ernesto Arceo, OP, open the exhibit. With the rector are Tempo editor Nestor Cuartero, F. Sionil José, former New York Times correspondent Alice Colet-Villadolid, and National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera.

The exhibit, curated by a team of Varsitarian alumni now working in the metropolitan media and set up by the incumbent staff's editors and artists with the help of emergent artist Buen Calubayan of the UST Museum, is most interesting and highly recommended to students of journalism and history. The core of the exhibit is a phalanx of well-laid-out pages from vintage as well as recent issues of the publication, each emblazoned with the masthead of the era.

Evolution

"We show the evolution of the paper in terms of mastheads," De Lara explains. The mastheads are from 1928 to the present, with plain black fonts but occasionally backdropped by an attractive sketch (like the main historic building of the university). The present masthead is enlivened by blue and gold colors, showing a smiling sun amid royal and pontifical symbols.

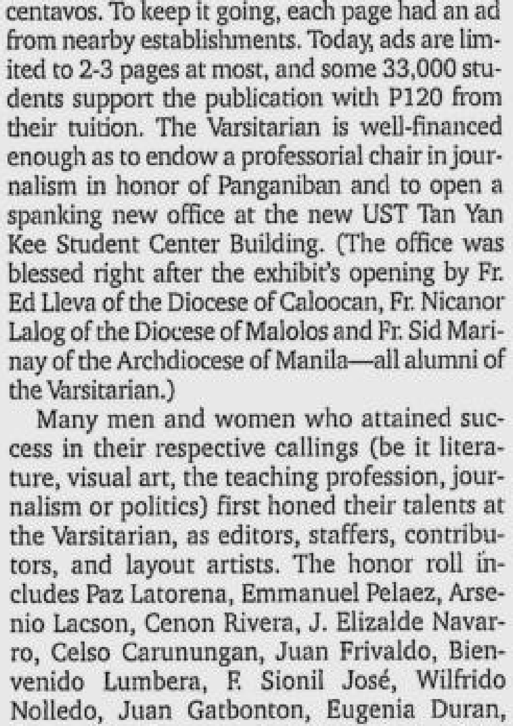
A collage of scraps from assorted issues announces the exhibit as you enter the museum. We see snippets of editorials, feature stories, essays, poems, and published photos of familiar, newsworthy personalities such as John Paul II, Ninoy Aquino, Pepe Diokno and even Khomeini of Iran.

There is a small antique typewriter (manual, of course), circa 1917, which was later "probably" used by one of the editors. And the former darkroom used by photographers has been recreated, as a kind of curiosity in this digital age.

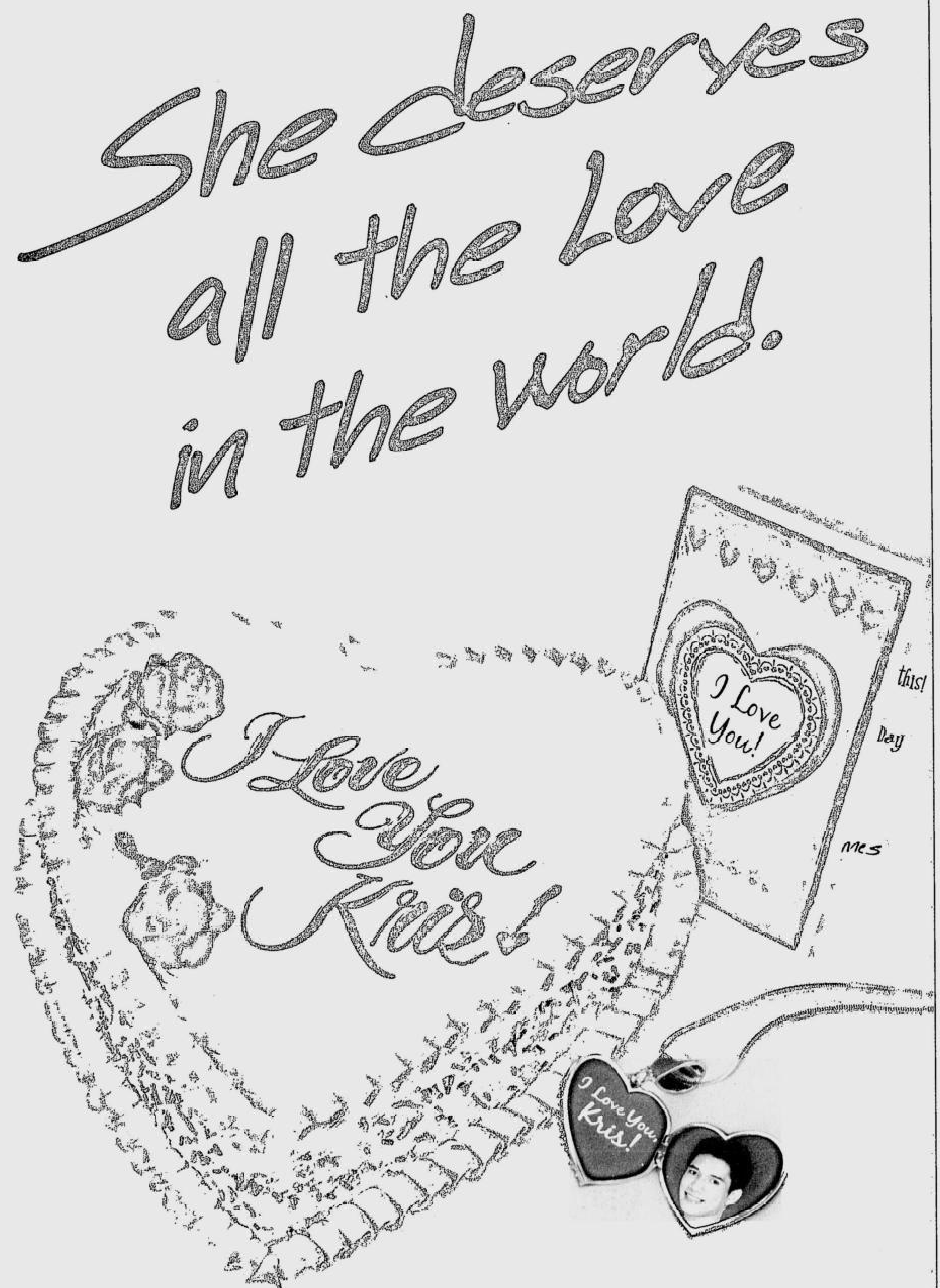
When the Varsitarian made its bow in 1928, only 426 out of a student population of 2,000 supported the paper with a contribution of 10 centavos. To keep it going, each page had an ad from nearby establishments. Today, ads are limited to 2-3 pages at most, and some 33,000 students support the publication with P120 from their tuition. The Varsitarian is well-financed enough as to endow a professorial chair in journalism in honor of Panganiban and to open a spanking new office at the new UST Tan Yan Kee Student Center Building. (The office was blessed right after the exhibit's opening by Fr. Ed Lleva of the Diocese of Caloocan, Fr. Nicanor Lalog of the Diocese of Malolos and Fr. Sid Marinay of the Archdiocese of Manila—all alumni of the Varsitarian.)

Many men and women who attained success in their respective callings (be it literature, visual art, the teaching profession, journalism or politics) first honed their talents at the Varsitarian, as editors, staffers, contributors, and layout artists. The honor roll includes Paz Latorena, Emmanuel Pelaez, Arsenio Lacson, Cenon Rivera, J. Elizalde Navarro, Celso Carunungan, Juan Frivaldo, Bienvenido Lumbera, F. Sionil José, Wilfrido Nolledo, Juan Gatbonton, Eugenia Duran, Gloria Garchitorena, Doris Trinidad, Sister Delia Coronel, Ophelia Dimalanta, Teodoro Benigno, Francisco Tatad, Neal Cruz, Alice Colet, Jullie Yap, Cirilo Bautista, Rogelio Sicat, Cristina Pantoja, Rina Jimenez, José Burgos Jr.,Eric Gamalinda, Antonio Lopez, Danny Dalena, Bernardo Bernardo, Archbishop Artemio Casas, Fr. Rolando de la Rosa, OP; Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ; Vim Nadera, Joselito Zulueta, and so many others.

By the 1970s, with the country in the grip of the dictatorship, the Varsitarian began to tackle national issues. This commitment continues. A recent story reported on Thomasians rallying and supporting the stand of the bishops against charter change. As the concluding text of the exhibit rightly declares: "After eight decades of struggle and glory, the Varsitarian continues to write history."



NATIONAL Artist José views a panel surveying the 1960s.


She deserves all the love in the world.
I Love You Kris!
I Love You!
this!
Day
Mes
I Love You Kris!

Celebrate Valentine's with a Goldilocks Heart-Shaped Strawberry Buttercream cake.

Goldilocks
BAKESHOP • FOODSHOP ®
Ang Sarap Magmahal Ng Pinoy.

* card and locket not included

LIFESTYLE

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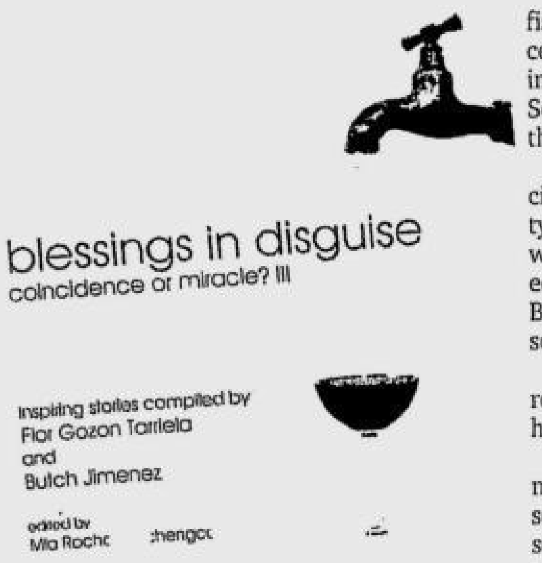
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Contemporary stories of love, life and inspiration

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor



THE WAKE-UP CALL, IF YOU could call it that, for songwriter-psychologist Bet Montecillo was the terrifying sight of her beautiful White Plains house in flames.

The house was razed to the ground; everything was lost, including 50 valuable paintings and sculptures. Fortunately, no one was killed and the couple's two sons and household staff were unhurt.

As Bet, still dazed, was trying to absorb all this, her husband, Ted, a banker, steadied her: "It's only a house!" Soon, the little miracles started to take place. Friends, relatives, neighbors whom they hardly knew, and the Citibank associates of Ted came to their assistance.

New clothes were given to them, along with a townhouse, which they could use rent-free as long as needed. Art dealer Mario Alcantara gave them paintings, with the proviso that they could pay for these at leisure.

An architect friend drew up plans for a new house "also almost for a song." And soon this became a reality, on the very spot where the old house burned down.

The Montecillo family lost a home, but emerged rich in blessings. Their experience is among several stories that comprise "Blessings in Disguise: Coincidence or Miracle? III," apparently the third in a series of stories compiled by Flor Gozon Tarriela and Butch Jimenez, and edited by Mia Rocha Lauchengco (published by Conquest for Christ Foundation, 277 pages, 2006).

Earthshaking experience

The experience of Veronica Gordon Lorenzana, owner of a resort along Subic Bay, was even more earthshaking—literally—than a house on fire.

In 1991, Mt. Pinatubo, after the silence of the centuries, erupted; it was a catastrophic tantrum that changed weather patterns around the world. Among the homes and properties destroyed was the Lorenzanas' high-end White Rock Resort: "... the entire resort looked like it was snowed in because of a blizzard, except this snow was gray." The swimming pool was a mess, and the roof of the ballroom had collapsed.

As the resort was being cleaned up and the ashes were being pushed into the bay, with bulldozers and trucks from nearby establishments joining in, the owners discovered that their shoreline had expanded.

A "natural" reclaimed area had emerged, and the beach of the resort had grown from two to six hectares.

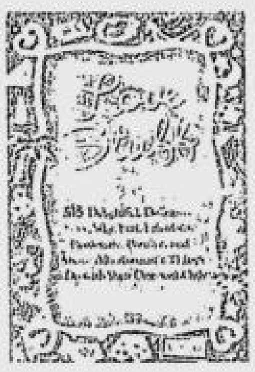
Less dramatic, more quiet and gentle—like the man himself—is the experience narrated by renowned muralist José "Pitok" Blanco. A fisherman turned visual artist, Blanco is a success story, with the whole family—wife Luring, children and grandchildren—painting. Son Michael Blanco had a recent solo show at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

With all this going for him, Pitok Blanco decided to give something back to his community in Angono, Rizal. Aware that his neighbors were determined to give their children a good education, he and his wife established the Blanco Family Academy, which has very reasonable fees.

There are now more than 600 students enrolled at the academy, and the first batch of high schoolers graduated the other year.

There is a common thread running through most of these true, inspiring stories. Out of some unforeseen, unfortunate event came something good. A negative experience was transformed into something positive, an enriching result. This the authors attribute to the Almighty.

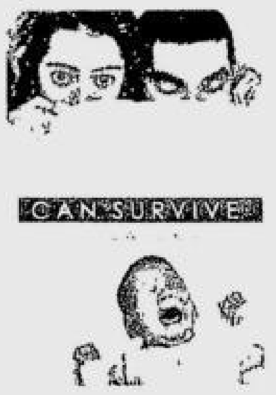
Books for married couples



"Love Stuff"
by Lorraine Bodger

This book puts romance front and center with 515 creative ways to fall in love with your one-and-only all over again. Whimsy is mixed with insight in ideas such as "Bake him an angel food cake when he's being angelic. Bake him a devil's food cake with he's being devilish."

"Your Relationship Can Survive a Newborn"
by Glenn and Natalie Williams



This book is born out of personal experience and professional expertise. With wisdom and humor, author and psychologist Glenn Williams and his wife Natalie share what they've learned about protecting and strengthening their life as a couple after the birth of each of their children.

"Getting Back Together"
by Dr. Bettie Youngs and Dr. Masa Goetz

"Getting Back Together" is the solid, comprehensive guide you can count on to get your relationship back on track. No matter what issues you may face, this step-by-step program shows you how to take the initiative, reconcile your differences, and remake your relationship from the ground up.

GETTING BACK TOGETHER

Available at selected National Book Store branches

'Mistress' guidebook makes a comeback

JULLIE Yap-Daza

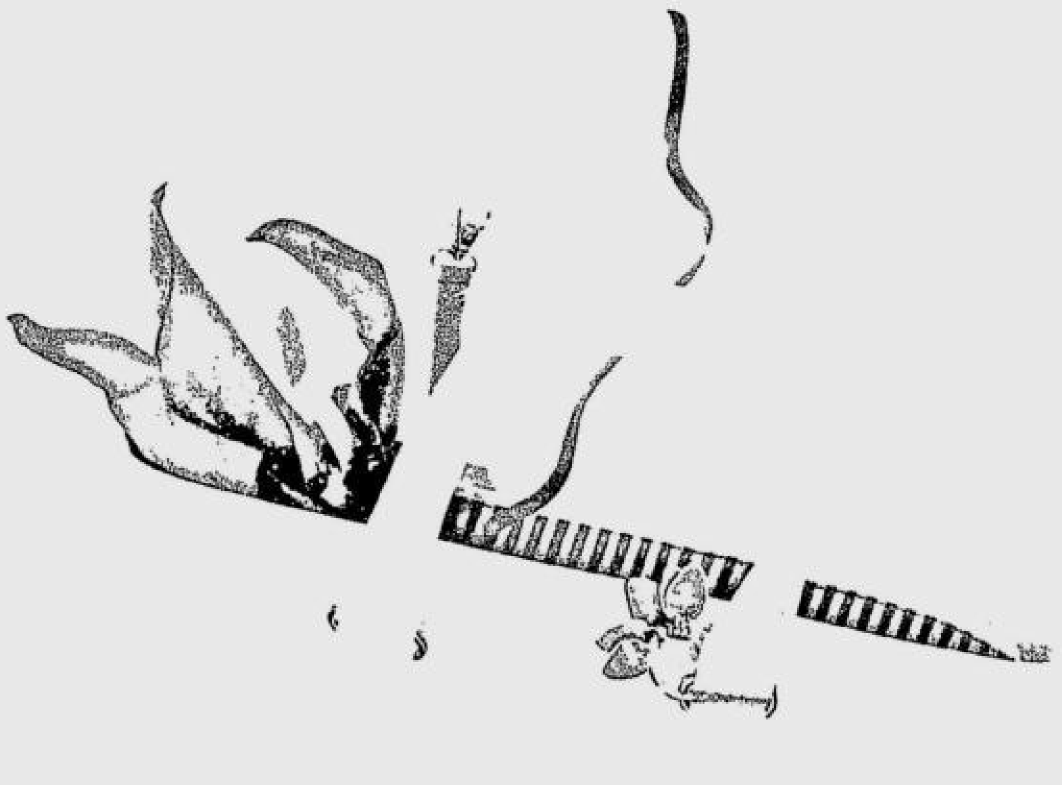
THE GUIDE FOR MISTRESSES and the wives who want to learn their secrets is back on the book shelf.

"Etiquette for Mistresses and What Wives can Learn from Them," the landmark bestseller by Jullie Yap-Daza, returns to National Book Store branches with a fresh new look for millennial readers who have been clamoring for their copy.

Anvil Publishing requested the author for a re-issue to meet the persistent and consistent demand for the book that invented the phrase "holiday orphan" and took the mistress out of the closet (if only in terms of the word replacing the colloquial "No. 2"; "kabit"; and "common-law wife").

"Etiquette for Mistresses" provides 28 rules for women who find themselves "trapped in love without marriage, romance without legitimacy." It is chockfull of practical wisdom, humor and humanity.

LACOSTE



un peu d'air sur terre

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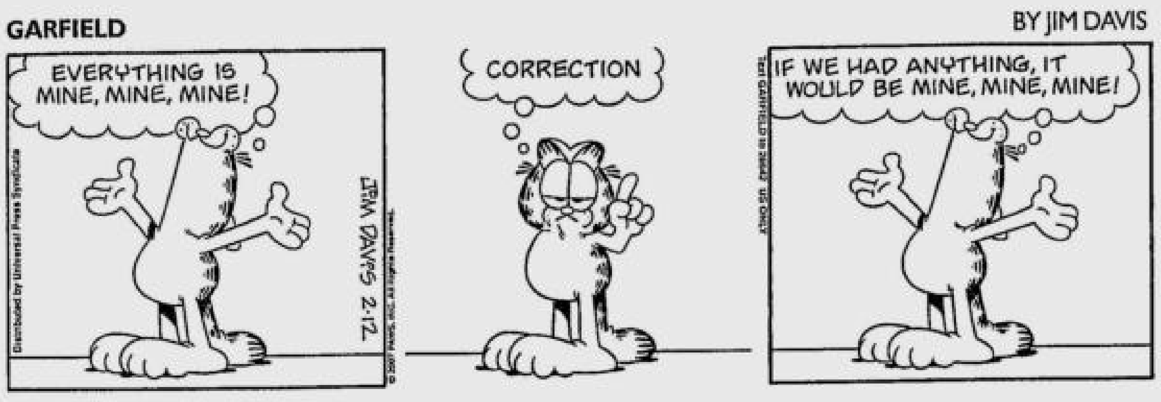
AYALA CENTER, CEBU · ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA · THE POWER PLANT (ROCKWELL CENTER)
GATEWAY MALL, ARANETA CENTER · SM MALL OF ASIA

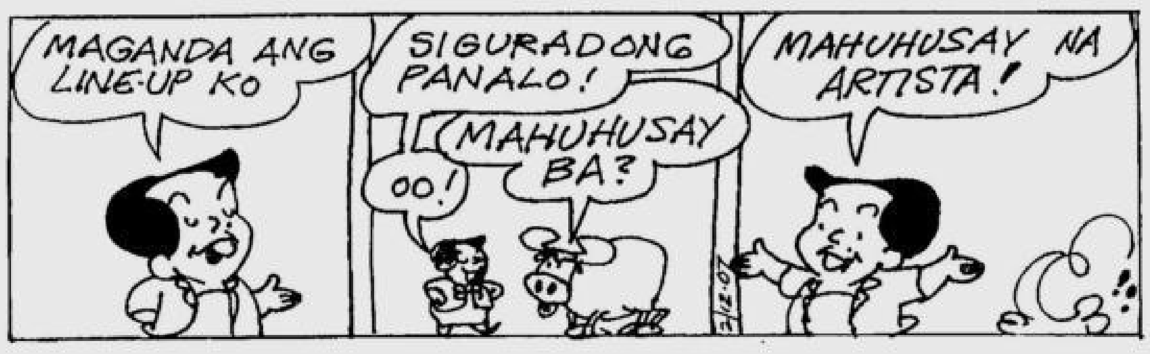
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


EVERYTHING IS MINE, MINE, MINE!
CORRECTION
IF WE HAD ANYTHING, IT WOULD BE MINE, MINE, MINE!
JIM DAVIS 2-12
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

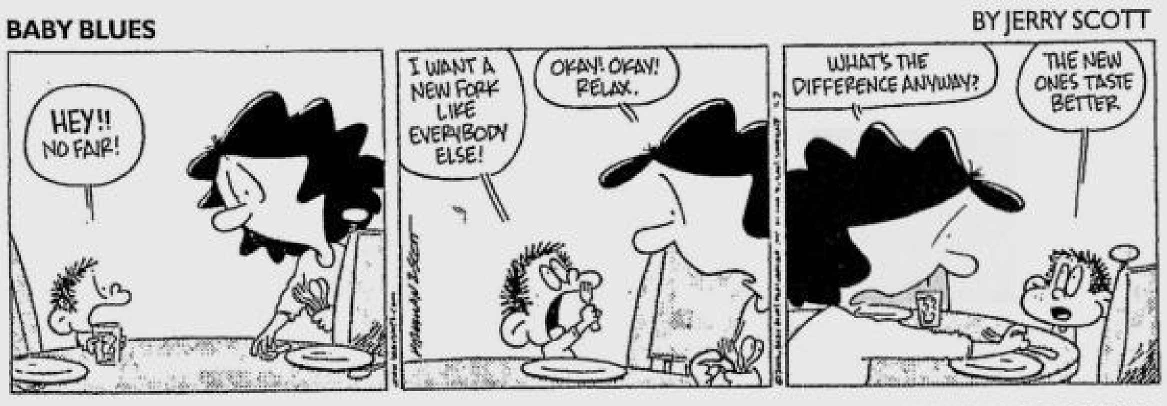
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MAGANDA ANG LINE-UP KO
SIGURADONG PANALO!
MAHUHUSAY BA?
OO!
MAHUHUSAY NA ARTISTA!

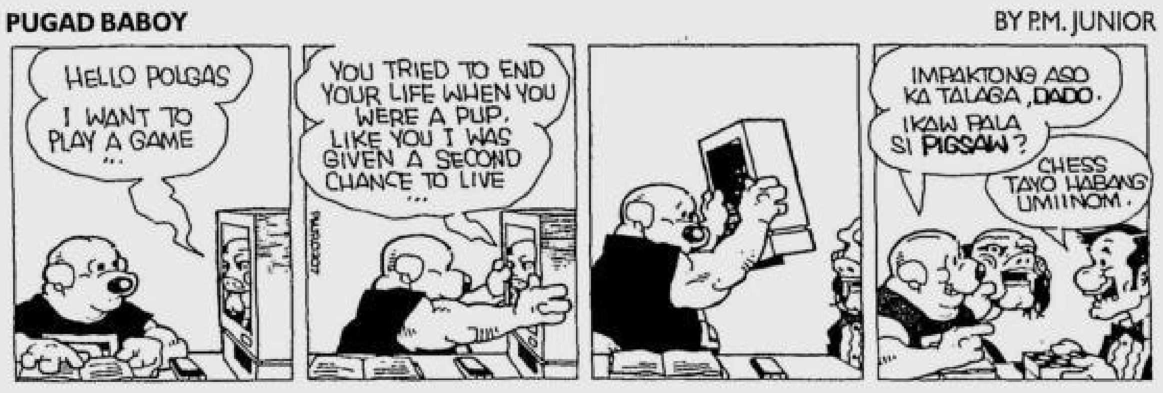
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HEY!! NO FAIR!
I WANT A NEW FORK LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE!
OKAY! OKAY! RELAX.
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE ANYWAY?
THE NEW ONES TASTE BETTER.

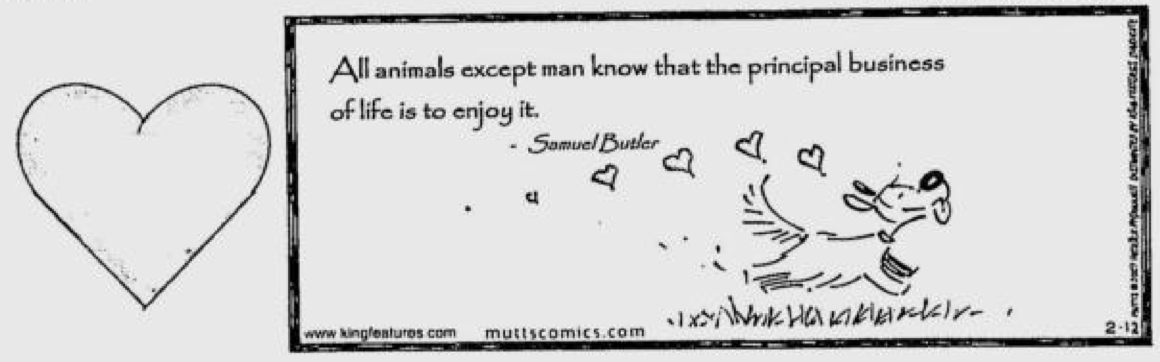
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HELLO POLGAS
I WANT TO PLAY A GAME ...
YOU TRIED TO END YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WERE A PUP. LIKE YOU I WAS GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE TO LIVE ...
IMPAKTONG ASO KA TALAGA, DADO.
IKAW PALA SI PIGSAW?
CHESS TAYO HABANG UMIINOM.

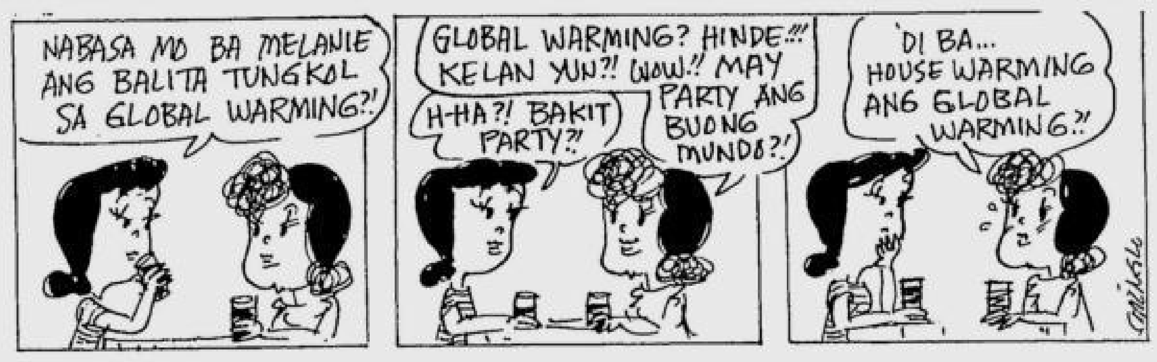
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


All animals except man know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it.
- Samuel Butler
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
2-12

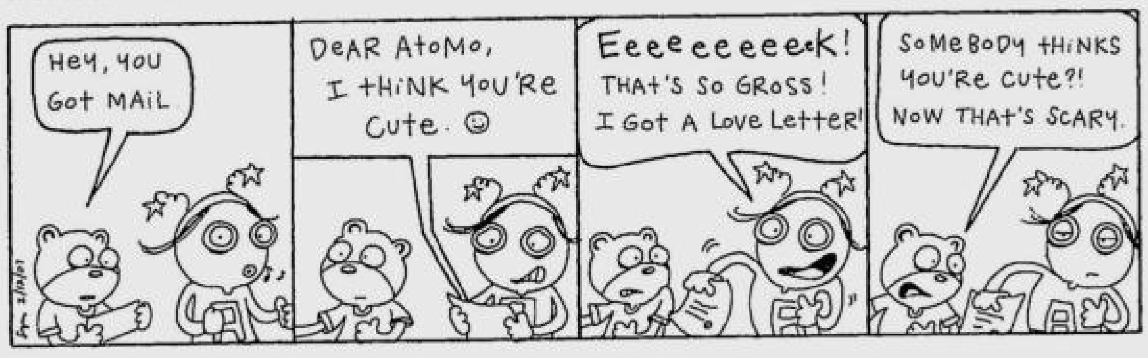
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NABASA MO BA MELANIE ANG BALITA TUNGKOL SA GLOBAL WARMING?!
GLOBAL WARMING? HINDE!!! KELAN YUN?! WOW!! MAY PARTY ANG BUONG MUNDO?!
H-HA?! BAKIT PARTY?!
'DI BA... HOUSE WARMING ANG GLOBAL WARMING?!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

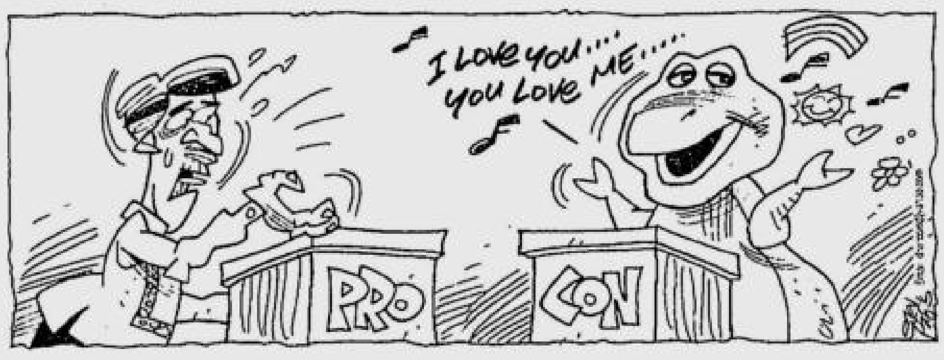
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, you Got MAIL
DeAR AtoMo, I tHiNK You'Re Cute. ☺
Eeeeeeeeek! THAT'S So GRoss! I Got A Love Letter!
SoMeBoDy tHiNKS You'Re Cute?! Now THAT'S SCARY.

DIVINE COMEDY

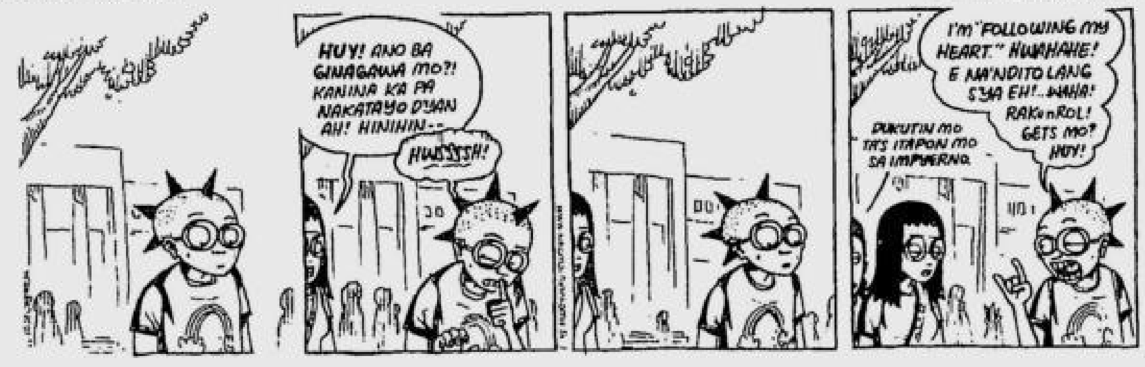
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

REMINDER:
HUWAG
NA HUWAG
PUMASOK
SA ISANG
THEOLOGICAL
DEBATE
KUNG ANG
MAKAKA-
LABAN MO
AY SI
BARNEY
THE PURPLE
DINOSAUR.


I Love you.... you Love ME.....
PRO
CON

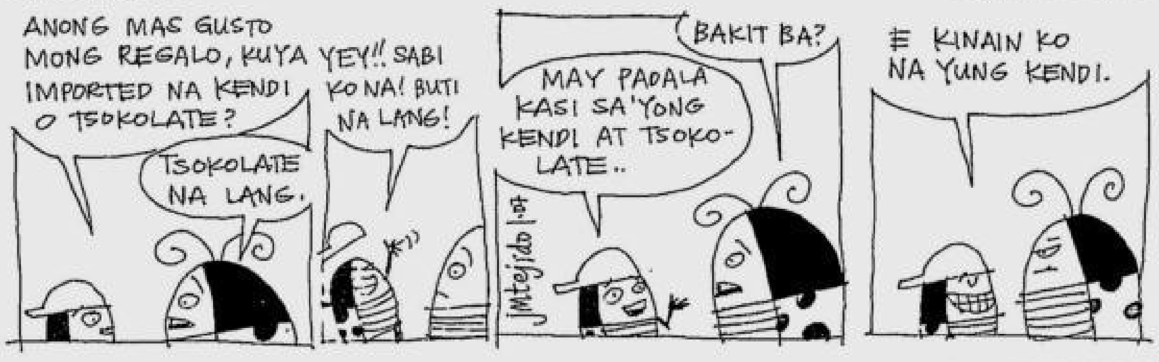
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HUY! ANO BA GINAGAWA MO?! KANINA KA PA NAKATAYO D'YAN AH! HININIIN--
HWSSSSH!
I'M "FOLLOWING MY HEART." HWAHAHE! E NA'NDITO LANG SYA EH!..WAHA! RAKnROL! GETS MO? HOY!
DUKUTIN MO TAS ITAPON MO SA IMPIERNO.

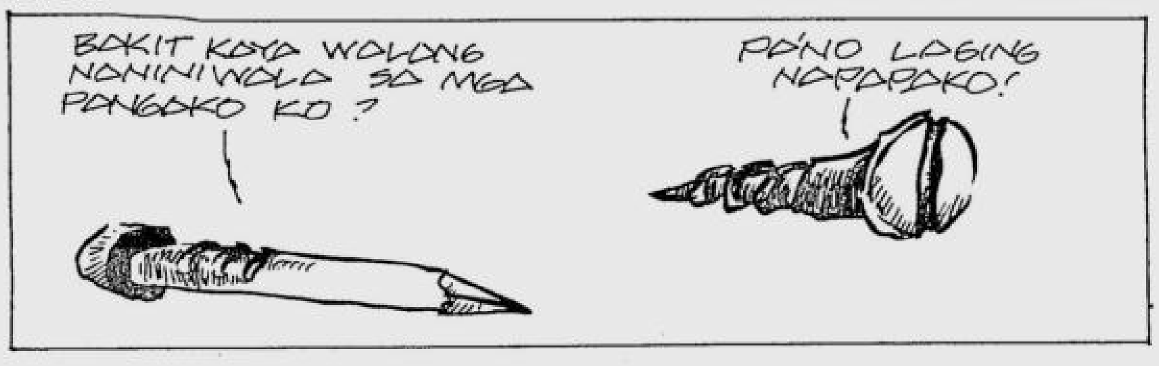
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANONG MAS GUSTO MONG REGALO, KUYA IMPORTED NA KENDI O TSOKOLATE?
TSOKOLATE NA LANG.
YEY!! SABI KO NA! BUTI NA LANG!
MAY PADALA KASI SA'YONG KENDI AT TSOKOLATE..
BAKIT BA?
KINAIN KO NA YUNG KENDI.
jmtejido 1-07

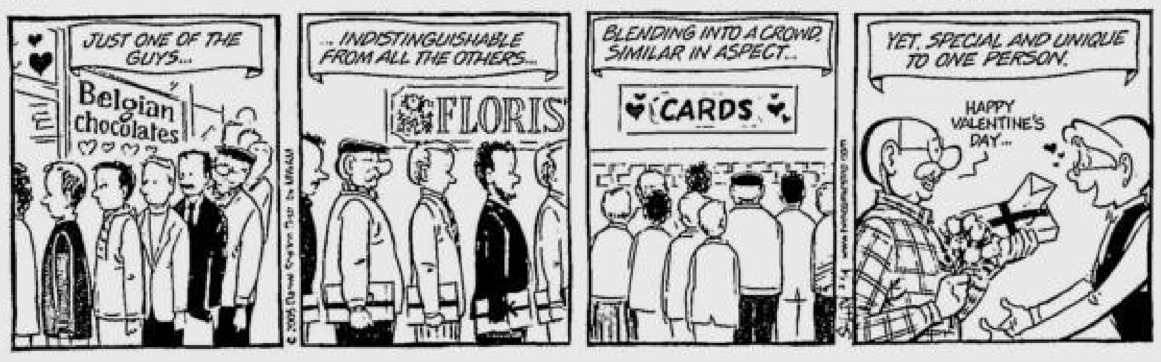
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

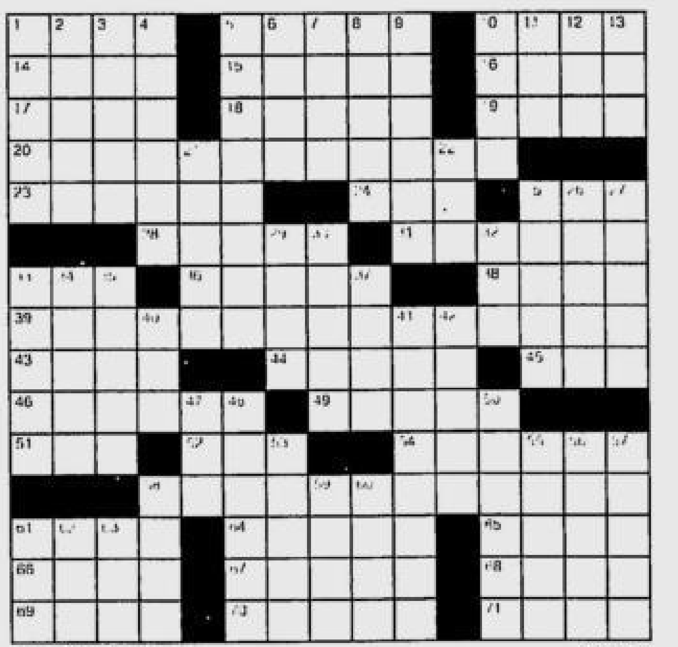

BAKIT KAYA WALANG NANINIWALA SA MGA PANGAKO KO?
PA'NO LAGING NAPAPAKO!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


JUST ONE OF THE GUYS...
Belgian chocolates
...INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM ALL THE OTHERS...
FLORIST
BLENDING INTO A CROWD, SIMILAR IN ASPECT...
CARDS
YET, SPECIAL AND UNIQUE TO ONE PERSON.
HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY...

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

2/12/07

ACROSS
1 Run smoothly
5 Utter disorder
10 Trial group
14 Rolling in it
15 Come from behind
16 Fencing foil
17 Italian eight
18 City on Ruhr
19 "Baseball Tonight" channel
20 Marksman
23 Greetings
24 Plopped down
25 Tilly or Ryan
28 More artful
31 Coleridge's palace
33 Lawyer's letters
36 Unprepared comment
38 Gymnast Korbut
39 Hurricane or flood, e.g.
43 Villainous
44 Hollers
45 Tack on
46 Powered bikes
49 Does in, as a dragon
51 Cen. units
52 Sci-fi creatures
54 Attractive places?
58 Hauler
61 Arnaz Sr. or Jr.
64 Pitcher Hideki
65 Pennsylvania port city
66 Court cry
67 Showed again
68 Go-fer
69 Saxophonist Stan
70 Paddle
71 More than half

DOWN
1 First-year students
2 Loose-limbed
3 Like base 8
4 Fingerprint convolutions
5 "Troilus and __"
6 Leftover meal
7 Not to mention
8 Butler wannabes
9 Study of word patterns
10 Abuse vocally
11 FedEx rival
12 Sales pro
13 Japanese cash
21 Of the Arctic
22 Greek letter
25 Valletta's nation
26 Sidled
27 Watchman
29 __ May Clampett
30 Carnival attractions
32 Discouraging words
33 Military adversary
34 Really enjoy
35 Trademark swabs
37 Tab
40 Glob or mod ending
41 Dramatic basket
42 Thus far
47 Dolores __ Rio
48 Domestic flights?
50 Piercing cry
53 Throat disorder
55 Odd souvenir
56 Digestive juices
57 Type of target shooting
58 Effervesce
59 Theda of silent films
60 Israeli statesman Abba
61 Canis familiaris
62 Hurricane heart
63 Solidify

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

C	U	S	T	O	M	■	O	B	S	E	S	S	O	R
A	T	T	I	L	A	■	S	E	A	S	C	A	P	E
P	R	E	M	I	X	■	S	A	L	A	A	M	E	D
L	I	T	■	V	I	S	A	■	S	U	T	U	R	E
E	L	S	■	E	M	U	■	■	■	■	■	R	A	Y
S	L	O	T	■	A	L	P	■	L	S	T	A	T	E
S	O	N	A	H	■	F	O	O	L	E	R	I	E	S
■	■	■	L	I	Q	U	I	D	I	T	Y	■	■	■
D	I	S	C	O	U	R	S	E	■	H	O	S	L	S
A	D	E	S	T	F	■	E	N	D	■	N	I	L	E
M	E	R	■	■	■	■	■	S	I	T	■	L	A	G
S	A	R	A	P	L	■	Z	E	R	O	■	K	I	M
E	M	A	C	I	A	T	E	■	E	R	M	I	N	E
L	E	T	M	E	S	E	L	■	C	A	R	E	E	N
S	N	E	E	R	E	R	S	■	T	H	I	R	S	T

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2/12/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a natural leader and mediator. You know how to get people talking to each other. (You understand what motivates people.) You have many talents and can pursue a wide variety of activities. You're also a strong nurturer—and tenacious; you never give up. Major changes could take place this year, perhaps as significant as something around 1998.

Birthdate of: Abraham Lincoln, 16th US president; Christina Ricci, actress; Michael Ironside, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Stay alert for opportunities for travel, and also for chances to improve your education. These are areas that are particularly lucky for you this year. You will expand your world!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can definitely benefit from others this year. If you're in a partnership, your partner will earn more money or get a bonus. Or, you might receive an inheritance. Ka-ching!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Partnerships and relations with others will enrich your life this year. Some of you will marry; others will enter into a committed partnership with someone older or richer.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Stay alert for ways to improve your job, because this is something you can definitely do this year. If your existing job doesn't improve, then you will find a better one.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Love, romance, vacations, creative adventures, playful times with children and pleasure are your focus this year. This might be one of the funnest years you've had in more than a decade!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is an excellent year for real estate for your sign. In fact, you can enrich your home life in many ways. Your family life will definitely be happier.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): First comes the thought, then comes the word. From the word springs the deed, and the deed is soon habit. Habit eventually hardens into character. Therefore, watch your thoughts carefully.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You can definitely expect to earn more money this year. You will also be spending more as well.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): For the first time in 12 years, your ruler, lucky Jupiter, is finally in your sign. This brings you good fortune, increased happiness and many opportunities to explore different directions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Many of you will expand the spiritual dimensions of your life this year. Your empathy and sympathy for others are increasing. This makes you a more beautiful person.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Get out your dancing shoes, because you have a popular year ahead! Join groups, clubs and organizations. Make new friends.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your career and your reputation among your peers will grow and blossom in a positive way in the year ahead. Expect powerful people and auspicious opportunities to come your way. Yay!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	8					5	3	9
5			8			1		2
					1		6	4
	2			3		7		
			6	1	9			
		5		8			4	
3	5		9					
7		2			5			3
8	4	1					2	

Difficulty Level ★

2/12

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	8	7	2	6	9	4	1	5
1	6	2	5	3	4	9	7	8
9	4	5	1	7	8	6	3	2
6	9	1	8	2	5	7	4	3
5	2	3	7	4	6	1	8	9
4	7	8	3	9	1	5	2	6
7	1	6	9	8	2	3	5	4
8	3	4	6	5	7	2	9	1
2	5	9	4	1	3	8	6	7

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

New children's book series reinvents Greek classics

By Neni Sta. Romana Cruz
Contributor

AS ANY READING TEACHER knows, referring to a piece of literature as a classic is the worst crime one can commit in class because it is the absolute turnoff for students.

Thanks to ineffective literature lessons, young people have unfairly associated classics with incomprehensible language and stuff that is boring and challenging to read—something from the distant past no longer relevant today.

Yet we know the value of teaching and reading classics, the rich body of literature that has continued to nurture creative souls in all disciplines through the ages.

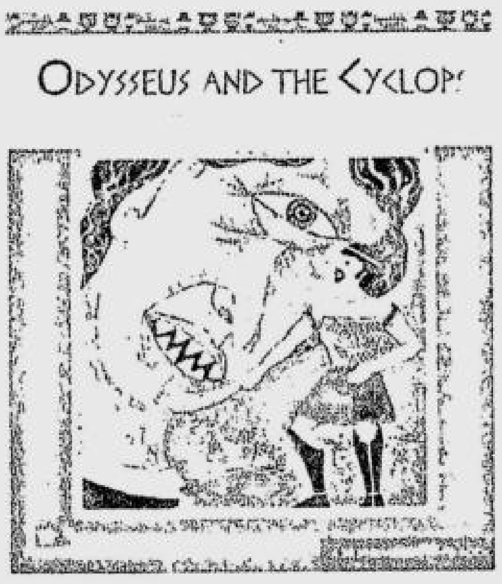
Students will not initially appreciate their timeless quality, but will sit up and take notice of how today's popular media draw from the classics, especially Greek mythology. The approach is probably the most painless introduction to the classics.

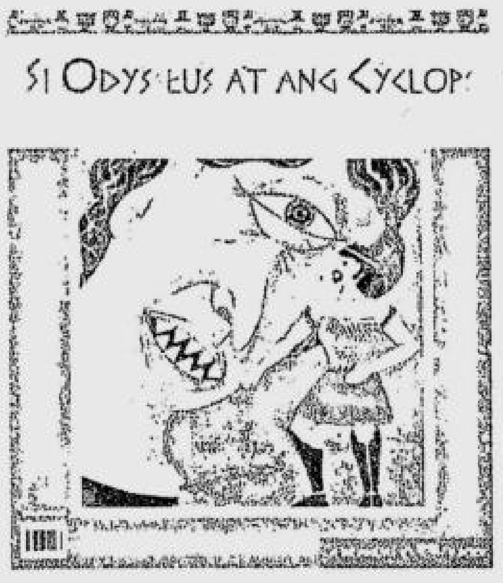
When first introduced to a Greek myth, students manifest instant recognition of the plot or the names of the characters because they have met them first in a nonliterary encounter—through a cartoon, a movie or even a commercial product like Nike (the winged goddess of victory in Greek mythology) or Mercury (the messenger of the gods in Roman mythology).

Tahanan Books takes the same tack in its latest releases. Packaged as the Bilingual Greek Myth Flipbooks, the series include such titles as "Odysseus and the Cyclops" ("Si Odysseus at ang Cyclops"), "The Trojan Horse" ("Ang Kabayo ng Troya"), and "Melampus and the Snakes" ("Si Melampus at ang Mga Ahas").

These stories, meant for 6-year-olds and above, are retold by Peggy Manuel and translated by Rene O. Villanueva, with illustrations by Rita Badilla-Gudiño.

The books make these classics (okay, there goes the C word) less formidable and such delightful reading. Villanueva's translations also facilitate learning Filipino, particularly for those coming from the English-only generation.




SI ODYSSEUS AT ANG CYCLOPS

"Melampus and the Snakes" will fascinate children because the snakes in the tale are portrayed with friendly attributes. For his kindness, Melampus is gifted with the ability to understand the language of animals.

A helpful two-page section following the English text includes "What is a Greek myth?" and "Did you know?" information. Thankfully, these are not labelled as a guide for the teachers or parents because that would only isolate the young readers.

Trivia on myths

Snake trivia that may fire the children's imagination include: the serpent with golden eyes that never closed protected the Golden Fleece; the Hydra with its nine snake-like heads; and Medusa with her hair of snakes.

From the trivia for Odysseus, one learns that the Cyclops that he outwitted was Polyphemus and that the Cyclopes (take note of the plural form!) were a race of one-eyed giants making thunderbolts for Zeus, the most powerful of the gods.

The eternally fascinating story of the Trojan horse has a funny surprise ending in this retelling, involving the Greek craftsman Epeius, who led in the building of the horse—but cursed by Athena so that he could only run backwards.

Publishing books for children in the country has always been complicated by the choice of language. In the early '90s, RayVi Sunico of Cacho Publishing used English-Filipino parallel texts for every page of the story. That idea took off, but was not too successful as the translated text would run into illustrations, cluttering the pages, making them hard to read and detracting from the artwork.

Now comes another approach. The new books from Tahanan are not your usual flip books—there are no pages or secret sections to flip open. Instead, one flips the entire book over to read the text in the other language. It seems to work, as it lessens the confusion.

One cannot imagine children reading these books and not wanting to delve deeper into mythology. This is a collection that should be in every home and school library.

For inquiries on the books, e-mail marketing@tahananbooks.com

The author is a member of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People and may be reached at nenisrc@gmail.com.

More books for married couples

'1001 Questions to Ask Before You Get Married'

Monica Mendez Leahy

Communication, compromise, and joint decision-making are key ingredients to a successful marriage. Using a variety of fun, interactive formats, including multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and hypotheticals, relationship expert Monica Mendez Leahy brings to the table these and many other important issues that will arise in every marriage—including the ones that may blindside you.

"1001 Questions to Ask Before You Get Married" will help you and your partner explore your common goals and perspectives as well as celebrate your unique differences as you prepare for your life journey together.

'A Kiss Is Still a Kiss'

Laura Jensen Walker

Popular author and humorist Laura Jensen Walker takes the "men and women are from different planets" idea and spins it into a unique blend of hang-in-there-anyway marriage tales from her own life as well as the lives of others.

'Being Married'

Sharon Aris

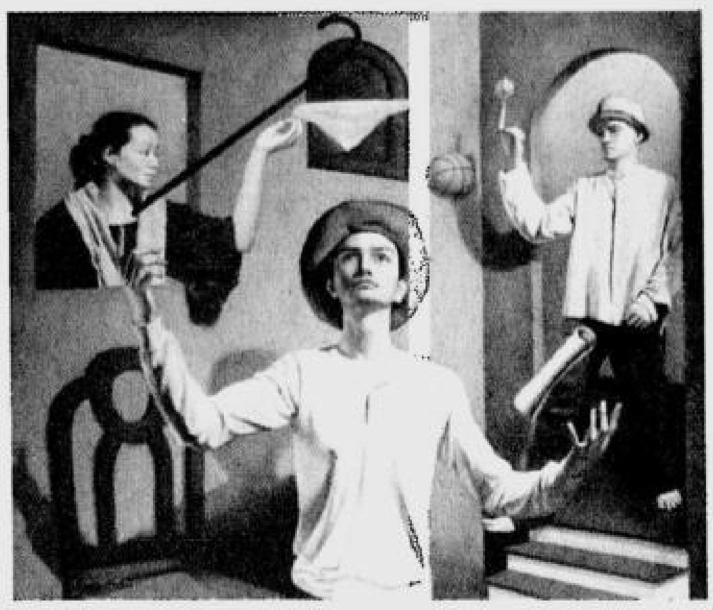
"Being Married" asks the big questions: "Why marry?" and, once you do, "How do you stay happily married?" Sharon Aris talks to marriage experts and married couples about what they're doing right, what they've done wrong and how they make it work. She gets into their beds and their bank accounts and shares the low-down on the fights, the negotiations and the making up. And she discovers that living "happily ever after" is easier than you think.

'The Seven Levels of Intimacy'

Matthew Kelly

"The Seven Levels of Intimacy" teaches us practical and unforgettable ways on how to know things about ourselves and how to share ourselves more deeply with the people we love. This book will change the way you approach your relationships forever!

Available at selected National Book Store branches.



PAINTING by John Santos III

Children's storybook contest launched

CAN YOU SEE THIS PICTURE AS A CHILDREN'S STORY?

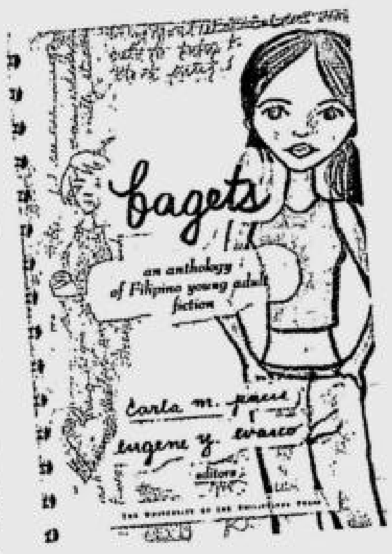
Then join the 2007 Romeo Forbes Children's Storywriting Competition. Visit www.lookingforjuan.blogspot.com for details.

Join now for a chance to win P30,000 and have your story published as a full-color children's storybook.

Book of Pinoy young-adult fiction released

"BAGETS: AN ANTHOLOGY of Filipino Young Adult Fiction" is a collection of short stories written in both English and Filipino for Filipino teenagers.

Published by the University of the Philippines Press and edited by Carla Pacis and Eugene Evasco, the book discusses teen issues and concerns in well-told narratives that are funny, poignant, cautionary and a bit risque.


bagets
an anthology of Filipino young adult fiction
carla m. pacis
eugene y. evasco
editors

"Bagets" is the response of literary group Kwentista ng mga Tsikiting (Kuting) to what it felt was a gap in many areas of children's literature in the country. For instance, Filipino section editor Evasco describes how Kuting contributors consciously deviated from stereotypical Hollywood images of dim-witted cheerleaders and geeky boys who transform into hunks, and instead wrote around the stuff that make up a truly Filipino adolescence: local TV programs and telenovelas, urban legends, even the pyramiding scam.

For the stories in English, editor Pacis explains how themes that concern young adults such as sexuality and body image, which have thus far been little explored by Filipino writers, are bravely tackled in this anthology, making "Bagets" both an invaluable contribution to YA literature and a challenge to Filipino writers to push the genre to new heights.

"Bagets: An Anthology of Filipino Young Adult Fiction" is published by the University of the Philippines Press and is available at Aeon Books on Katipunan, Popular Bookstore on T. Morato, Solidaridad, PowerBooks, National Book Store, Bound Bookshop, Fully Booked, and at the University of the Philippines Press bookstores in UP Diliman, Baguio and Davao.

The muffin has come a long way

Specialty breads and pastries continue to enrich the breakfast fare of Filipinos. The wide range of choices now available in the market has also opened a whole new world of taste and exposed the local palate to breakfast traditions from the West World.

Travel and exposure to dining options also made the Pinoy more adventurous and cosmopolitan in his eating habits. The continental breakfast with specialty breads, jam and fruit is now familiar to him. So is English tea time with its tiny cakes and pastries, translated by Pinoys as merienda time. A common item in these dining traditions is the muffin.

With its sweetish taste and fruity flavor, the muffin easily appeals to Pinoy taste buds.

The muffin first made an appearance in Victorian England. It was originally made of leftover bread, biscuit dough scraps, and mashed potatoes and eaten by servants. But when their masters had a taste of the delectable muffins, they liked it and the once lowly pastry was elevated to fancy bread status.

In America, the first muffin store was set up in downtown Chicago. Just like the English, Americans instantly took to the muffin.

In the Philippines, muffins are regular fare in specialty bakeshops in malls, hotel coffee shops, restaurants, and doughnut shops. Placed alongside other specialty breads and pastries, they are often upscale and relatively expensive.

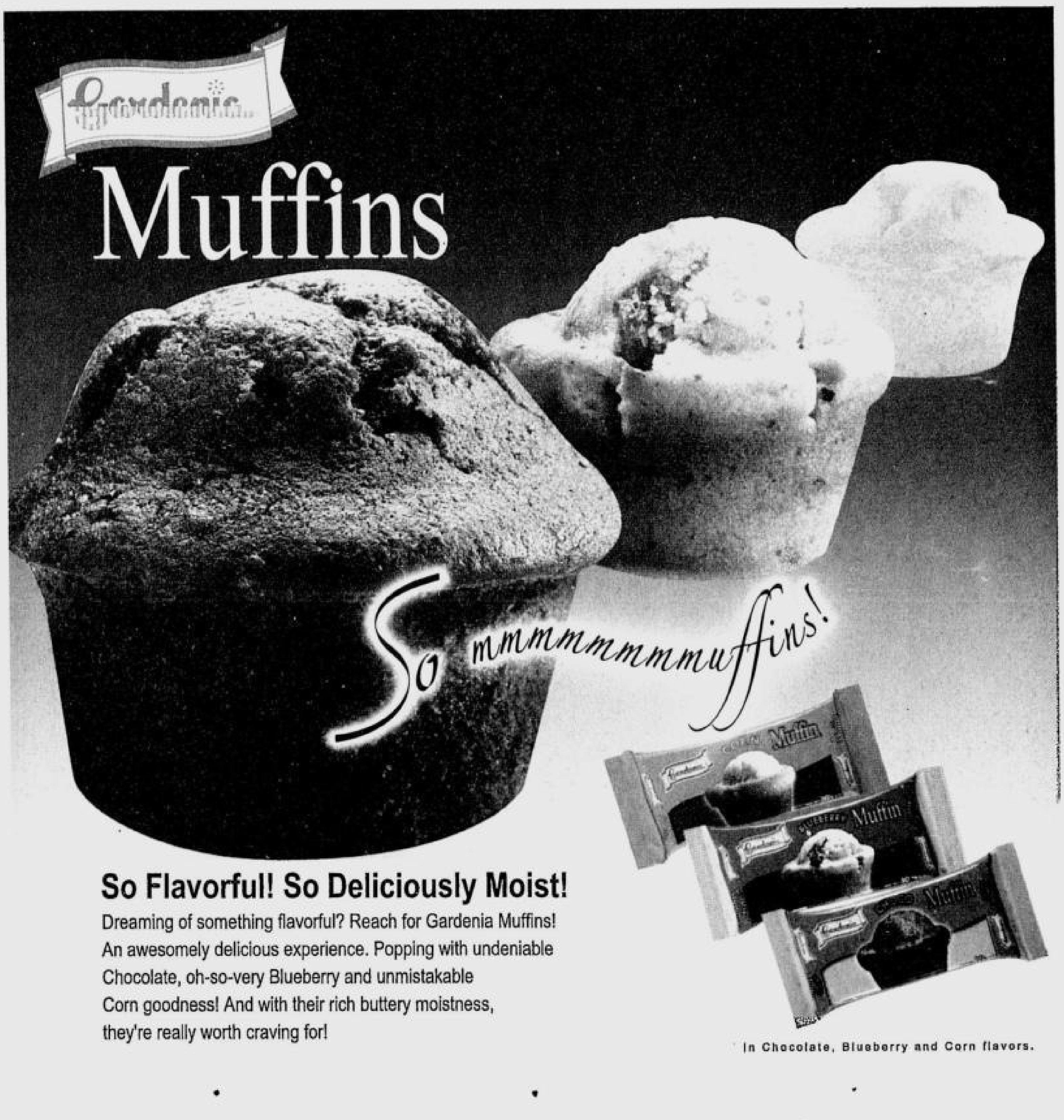
This is why Gardenia, known for producing high-quality and delectable breads, moves another step forward with the introduction of its Gardenia Muffins. Gardenia pioneers in bringing these delicious muffins closer to the Pinoy household with its unsurpassed distribution network, making Muffins now visible in the shelves of the country's leading supermarkets and grocery stores so it's readily available and within reach to almost every Filipino.

Gardenia Muffins are made in the American tradition. For a fruity and tangy taste, there's the Blueberry Muffin. The Corn Muffin with its natural sweet flavor is for corn fanatic. And for the chocoholic, there's the ultimate flavorful Chocolate muffin. All bursting with mouth-watering flavors that are sure to appeal to the Filipino's sweet tooth!

Gardenia Muffins are also great to enjoy with a cup of coffee or tea. And since it comes in packs of three, it's one filling snack ideal to share with a loved one, be it for breakfast or snacks, or as a fitting dessert after a sumptuous meal.

So Mmmmmmmmuffins!

ADVT.



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Dreaming of something flavorful? Reach for Gardenia Muffins! An awesomely delicious experience. Popping with undeniable Chocolate, oh-so-very Blueberry and unmistakable Corn goodness! And with their rich buttery moistness, they're really worth craving for!

In Chocolate, Blueberry and Corn flavors.

Celebrate the Season of hearts at SM Supermalls

SM Supermalls' love affair with its shoppers has grown stronger through the years. This Valentine season, families visit their neighborhood SM Supermalls and enjoy the many pleasures of shopping and eating out specially lined up for them.

SM Supermalls has fashioned an exciting repertoire of events that celebrate its continuing romance with millions of Filipino mallers. Among the Valentine offerings are dating games, souvenir photo opportunities, Valentine make-over sessions and musical presentations.

i just love shopping at
SM
SUPERMALLS
February 14 is Valentine's Day
SM City Cagayan de Oro • SM City San Lazaro • SM Supercenter Valenzuela • SM Supercenter Molino • SM City Clark • SM City Sta. Rosa • SM Supercenter Pasig

Calendar of Events

METRO MANILA

"Three for Love"
A Valentine concert series, featuring the members of the Philippine Opera Company (Karla Gutierrez, Ana Feleo and Bimbo Cerrudo)

SM Megamall Feb. 12
SM City Manila Feb. 13
The Block at SM City North Edsa Feb. 15

"Fevrier Aventure Amoureuse"
A February love affair

The Block at SM City North Edsa Feb. 12 - 14

Megalucky in Love
Luxurious giveaway items for the celebrants

SM Megamall Feb. 12 - 16

Celebrate Love with Lani Misalucha
Listen to love songs by Asia's Nightingale

SM Megamall Feb. 18

Monday Melodies

SM Megamall Feb. 19
with Girl Valencia

Wellness Wednesday
Come for free health and beauty consultation sessions

SM Megamall Feb. 25

Monday Melodies

SM Megamall Feb. 26
with Soulful Mood

Vanity Fair
A Valentine make-over

SM City Manila Feb. 12 - 16

"Picture Perfect Moments"
Photo-op for the shoppers

SM City Bicutan Feb. 12 - 14

PROVINCIAL LUZON

"Me & My Valentine"
SM City Dasmariñas Feb 12-14

Valentine Dating Game
SM City Lipa Feb. 13-14
SM City Dasmariñas Feb. 16

"Love is in the Air"
SM City Clark Feb. 13 & 15

Pedro Penduko's
Matt Evans & Melissa Ricks
SM City Batangas Feb. 14

Day of Romance Serenade
SM City Clark Feb. 14

Valentine Acoustic Soiree
SM City Pampanga Feb. 14

Sonare String Ensemble
SM City Marilao Feb. 14

"Especially for You"
SM Supercenter Molino Feb. 14

Stop, Dine & Fall in Love
Valentine Serenade
SM City Pampanga Feb. 14 - 15

Laugh Your Heart Out
SM City Pampanga Feb. 17

Love Sirens with Nina & Sitti
SM City Sta. Rosa Feb. 18 & 24

"All Friday Love Chill"
SM City Lipa Feb. 23

PROVINCIAL VISMIN

VALENTINE CONCERTS

February 14

Nikki Gil	SM City Cebu
Love Duets	SM City Iloilo
Bossa Nova	SM City Davao
TJ Trinidad	SM City Cagayan de Oro

VALENTINE CONTESTS

Strings@Home
The 2nd Home Radio Acoustic Competition
SM City Iloilo Feb. 12

Campus Radio
2Gether Again Contest
Valentine Dating Game
SM City Cagayan de Oro Feb. 13

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

sms f /city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph **Website:** www.inquirer.net/entertainment

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VINA MORALES

Women of 'Flor'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WITH SOME TREPIDATION, EULA Valdes and Vina Morales are tackling their roles on the new ABS-CBN soap opera "Maria Flordeluna."

Both are aware that the original RPN-9 series "Flordeluna," which starred Janice de Belen in the late 1970s and early 1980s, was nothing less than a pop culture phenomenon, along with its rival "Anna Liza" on GMA 7.

"I heard it was very successful. I was five years old at the time and still based in Cebu," recalls Vina, who takes over the role of Flordeluna's mom Elvira, originally portrayed by Emma Yuhico.

"I was the same age as Janice then. Watching the show became a habit for me," remembers Eula, who is reprising the role of Flor's stepmother Jo, originated by Laurice Guillen.

The new "Flor," which debuts tonight, marks a departure from the RPN-9 soap.

"The writers based this series more on the radio serial [by Marcos Sacol], a hit in Cebu before it was turned into a TV show," explains Vina.

Their characters are more fleshed out, compared to the earlier TV incarnations, Vina and Eula assert.

Elvira, for example, is not a one-dimensional martyr. "She's very complicated," Vina notes. "You'll understand why she stole Leo (played by Albert

WOMEN/ F2

EULA VALDES

NO. 1* SA TAWAGAN!
NO. 1 SA TAWANAN!
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Humalakhak, ang buhay ay sasaya... TAWA NA!
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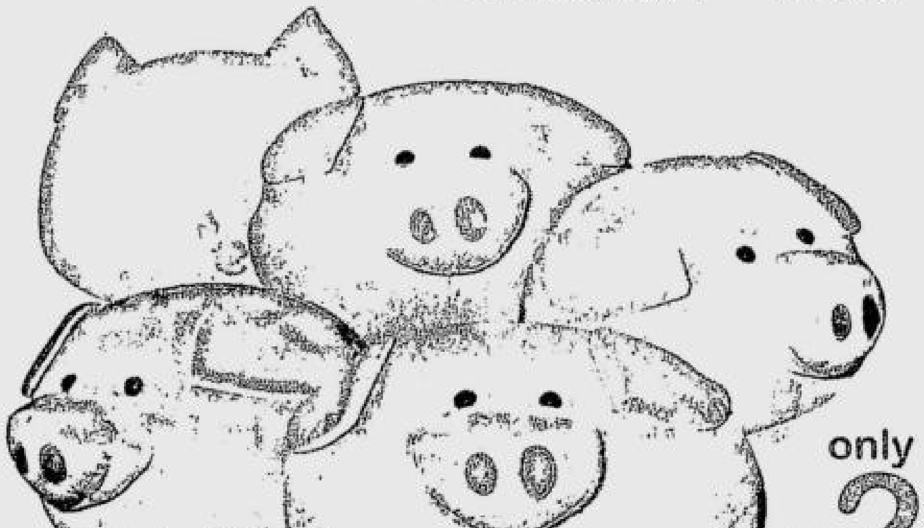

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Visayas & Mindanao branches : Promo Starts February 12, 2007

Per DTI-NCR Permit No.0183, Series of 2007.

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GALLERIA
Ticket Price THX: P161 131 indieSine: 101 632-9116

1 NIGHT at the MUSEUM • THX
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

2 THE HOLIDAY
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

3 indieSine: COMPOUND
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

5 HANNIBAL RISING
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 THE MESSENGERS
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

7 THE CLEANER
1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

8 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE 12:00 2:10 4:20
LITTLE CHILDREN 6:40 9:40

9 APOCALYPTO
1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00

10 CHARLOTTE's WEB
1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

ERMITA
Ticket Price: P110 536-7809 to 12

1 THE HOLIDAY
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
12:30 2:50 5:10 7.30 10.00

3 HANNIBAL RISING
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10.00

4 THE CLEANER
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

5 THE MESSENGERS
12.20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10.00

6 APOCALYPTO
12:35 3:40 6:45 10:00

7 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
12.35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

METRO EAST
Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE CLEANER
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 THE MESSENGERS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

3 APOCALYPTO
12:30 3:10 6:00 9:00

4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
12:00 2:10 4:20 6:40 9:00

5 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

6 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
12:00 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

7 HANNIBAL RISING
12:50 3:35 6:20 9:05

8 THE HOLIDAY
12:30 3:10 6:00 9:00

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price: [illegible] 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE CLEANER
5 APOCALYPTO

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P100 687-5375

1 THE HOLIDAY
12:05 2:55 5:45 8:35

2 THE MESSENGERS
1:10 3:35 6:00 8:25

3 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
1:30 3:55 6:20 8:40

4 HANNIBAL RISING
12:55 3:25 5:55 8:25

CHECK THIS OUT ▶▶

Robinsons Movieworld and Independent Filmmakers Cooperative
FEBRUARY 7 - 13, 2007
IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria

A stunning visual achievement, COMPOUND is a contemporary thriller that deals with the complexities of love, wealth, and fear. A perfectly unexpected and well-executed ending make this a film not to be missed.
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"Melrose Place", as seen through the unflinching eyes of David Lynch and Mike de Leon.
- Paul Dazo, Philippine Daily Inquirer

a WILL FREDO film
COMPOUND
KILALA MO SILA

MTRCB Rating: R-18 Strictly for Adults
mossimo
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3 LITTLE CHILDREN
4 THE MESSENGERS

LIPA
Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
2 TENACIOUS D
3 AGENT X44
4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price: P75/80 (046) 416-4332

1 THE MESSENGERS
2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P90 (045) 892-2348

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2 CHARLOTTE's WEB
3 THE MESSENGERS
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 APOCALYPTO
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
5 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

STARMILLS
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3 AGENT X44
4 THE MESSENGERS
5 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
6 APOCALYPTO

BACOLOD
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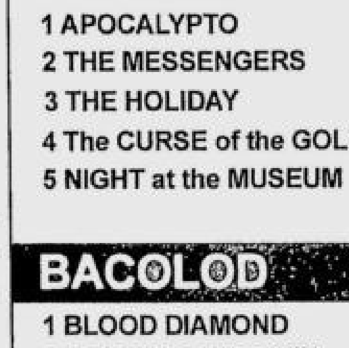
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 AGENT X44
6 TENACIOUS D

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 CHARLOTTE's WEB
2 AGENT X44
3 SPIRIT TRAP
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 BLOOD DIAMOND



indieSine Featured FILM for next week
Rome and Juliet

starring: Mylene Dizon and Andrea del Rosario

This tale follows the romantic journey of two straight women caught in a web of forbidden love. Juliet, a conservative pre-school teacher hires Rome, a liberated businesswoman to be her wedding planner. As they go through the preparations, the two develop a relationship that the groom to be soon finds out.

Stars' amorous antics recalled

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AFTER **ANGELINA JOLIE** "STOLE" **Brad Pitt** from **Jennifer Aniston**, some people were shocked. But "Brangelina's" passionate proclivities pale in comparison to the even more colorful and complicated amorous antics of other established stars in show biz years gone by.

Warren Beatty made his great looks his ticket into many female stars' hearts.

He built his "Cassanova of the cinema" reputation early on, with a big-screen debut in "Splendor in the Grass" in 1961 and romance with his leading lady, **Natalie Woods**, who left her husband (**Robert Wagner**) for Beatty.

But he was too frisky to want to settle down just yet, so he soon got involved with the beautiful French actress **Leslie Caron**. This led to a divorce case in which he was named correspondent.

Beatty became so identified with "lady killing" that in one of his films, art imitated life: In "Shampoo," he played a hairdresser-cum-superstud who bedded women played by **Goldie Hawn, Lee Grant, Carrie Fisher** and **Julie Christie**—all in a single day! (Incidentally, the film was shot shortly after the break-up of his off-screen relationship with Christie.)

Female counterpart

Beatty was also romantically involved with **Michelle Phillipps** and **Diane Keaton**, but his days were over when he fell in love with **Annette Bening**, his co-star in "Bugsy."

Beatty's female counterpart in Hollywood is **Elizabeth Taylor**, who is reported to have similarly had multiple lovers—the big difference is, she married seven of them (sequentially, of course).

Her first marriage was to hotel chain heir **Nicky Hilton**. Other hubbies included actor **Michael Wilding**, producer **Mike Todd** and singer **Eddie Fisher**.

Controversial union

Todd was killed in a plane crash, and Taylor was soon caught up in a scandalous affair with his best friend, Fisher, who was then married to **Debbie Reynolds**. Scandal continued to wiggle its pointy head until Taylor married Fisher, but the controversial union still didn't endure.

Taylor next married one of her greatest loves, **Richard Burton**, whom she met on the set of "Cleopatra." She loved him so much that, after their divorce, she upped and married him again. Later, she married senator **John Warner** and, when that union didn't pan out, either, she got hitched to **Larry Fortensky**, a construction worker. Talk about covering a very wide field.

Other stars' amorous antics: **Jack Nicholson** was married in his pre-"Easy Rider" days to actress **Sandra Night**, but their relationship didn't survive his elevation to star status. After its failure, his stellar girlfriends' names read like a Hollywood register, but pride of place belongs to on-off long-time lover, **Angelica Huston**.

During one of the out phases, Nicholson had a fling with Diane Keaton, then the girlfriend of his best friend, Beatty (small world!). However, the naughty misdemeanor didn't break up their friendship.

And **Woody Allen**, of course, is notorious for breaking up his long-term relationship with **Mia Farrow** by having an affair with **Soon-Yi Previn**, one of Farrow's adopted children from a previous marriage to conductor **Andre Previn**. The scandal heated up even more when Farrow accused Allen of molesting their then 7-year-old adopted daughter, **Dylan**. No evidence was found to substantiate the charges, but the damage to Allen's reputation had already been done.

'Stop the Clocks'

Oasis' new 18-track double album, "Stop the Clocks," is a musical retrospective of the hit songs that have enabled the popular band to chalk up sales of 40 million albums to date worldwide.

Cuts range from the early "Supersonic," through songs from 14 times platinum seller "What's the Story," to "The Importance of Being Idle."

'I like Idi Amin, I do'

TAKE FIVE

FOREST WHITAKER, ON THE verge of Oscar glory, talks about his most important role to date, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, in Fox Searchlight's critically acclaimed thriller "The Last King of Scotland."

In the film, a Scottish doctor named Garrigan (James McAvoy) on a Ugandan medical mission becomes irreversibly entangled with one of the world's most barbaric figures. Impressed by Garrigan's brazen attitude in a moment of crisis, Amin handpicks him as personal physician and confidante. Garrigan is at first flattered and fascinated by his new position, but he soon awakens to the truth.

What went through your head when asked to play Idi Amin?

First I was, like, "Whoa." I had very dark images of this ... big angry black man, who was a maniac or something. So, I read the book then as I started to do more and more research, I began to have a different understanding of Idi Amin. It became a challenge for me as an actor. When you [watch] the tapes he is an extremely charming man—funny, well-loved by the army, even loved by the people [at some point].

So, how would you say both you and the film present him?

[The movie] is about the journey of these two people as told from Garrigan's eyes. But it is also about people becoming corrupted by power. Yes, [Idi Amin] is very complicated, but he does have, in his mind, reasons [for doing things]. He does want to build more schools and create hospitals and fix roads, but the way he was trying to do it sometimes was just not practical. When he starts to see that he is losing power, he becomes extremely paranoid and becomes a darker figure.

Do you sympathize with him?

I like Idi Amin, maybe because I am so into playing him, I do. I feel he did some very horrible things, but also some of the things that he did were out of trying to help [his people].

Do you think he ever realized what he was doing?

I think he understood. Some of the things that happened—I don't think he was completely aware of, he gave power. When you see some of the interviews, he would be talking to his cabinet and he would say, "If someone is doing something wrong, you take care of it. If they are like a traitor, deal with them and tell me later." I think he was just a little too relaxed about certain things and it backfired.

He had good feelings—pride, a love for his children. I went to his village and talked to his brother and sister and they told me he was a good man. You read some of the stories when he was a soldier and people ... really liked him. He cared about his friends. He spoke, like, 10 languages, but English was not his first language so you can't judge him by the way he talks.

He was also a very funny man, you said.

He was a showman, he had his moments.

Tell us about the physical aspect of embodying him.

I am not doing a direct impersonation, but I studied tapes of him to help me understand the man. And language, too, to work out the way he talked. I studied Swahili because that was his first language. There were a couple of times when I literally struggled to think of an English word, when I had Swahili. There was the key—I learned when to pause and how to say things.

I studied the man in that sense. I tried to catch his spirit, and it is sometimes in the gestures. If you do certain things you behave in a certain way. I tried to grab the essence of the man. He was a real person.

FOREST WHITAKER AP

Women of 'Flor'

From page F1

Martinez) from Jo. There are no traditional *contravidas* on this show."

"My Jo is not the usual cruel step mother," adds Eula. "She wants to be close with Leo's and Elvira's kids."

The "Flor" cast has grown quite chummy on the set.

Eula and Vina dote on child stars Eliza Pineda and Nash Aguas, who portray Flor and Rene Boy, respectively.

"They are hard-working and excellent in the crying scenes," Vina says.

"I play games with them," Eula offers. "You'd often catch us on the floor, playing pick-up sticks and mini-pool."

Eula was a judge on the talent search 'Star Circle Kid Quest,' where Nash was the big winner."

The entire cast participated in a series of workshops. "One of our facilitators was Ana Feleo, daughter of Direk Laurice," Eula reports.

Johnny Delgado, Laurice's husband, is also in the cast as Gen. Carlos, Leo's father.

The workshops' goal was to make the characters "distinct," says Eula, who has her work cut out for her, as she's seen on another *Kapamilya* soap, the re-run of "Pangako sa 'Yo."

"I have to make Jo completely different from Amor Powers [of 'Pangako']," Eula says.

Eula and Vina had worked on another ABS-CBN soap "Saan Darating ang Umaga" prior to "Flor."

"We're very close," says Vina. Eula agrees. "We call each other 'sis.'"

The two admit that their common leading man, Albert, was initially "reserved."

"The challenge was to make sure we had chemistry," Vina acknowledges.

"We worked to shed our inhibitions through the sensuality exercises during the workshops," says Eula. "As taping progressed, we became more at ease with each other."

---

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Shielding his family from a looming misfortune, Virgilio delos Reyes keeps appearances through the aid of crystal methamphetamine. Virgilio and his wife receive Jay Juanillo as their tenant to escape the realities of his life from his wife and young male lover, settles in and builds relations with the delos Reyes family. From the seeming idyllic setting, Jay witnesses the slow implosion of the delos Reyes family and gets tangled in the power struggle within the compound. As Virgilio's paranoia escalates, Jay becomes an easy target, a scapegoat of Virgilio's inability to distinguish reality and hallucination. When their stategies of escape break down and reality catches up with them, the violence outside the gates find its way into the compound.

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"XANDA"

"BLOOD DIAMOND"

Int'l film season begins . . .

From page F4

heartedly recommend "I Not Stupid" for starters—see if you're not hooked.

Intelligent Filipino moviegoers are understandably in a quandary when movie-industry people appeal to their sense of nationalism and offer them mostly trashy movies.

No quarrel

It is jingoism of the worst kind when they force you to swallow the line "Support Filipino movies" and then feed you with garbage.

Illiterate movies corrupt. They have no place in a literate film culture.

We would rather watch intelligent foreign films than support local trash—and who's going to quarrel with that?

CHEER FACTOR

LOS ANGELES—HAND-DRAWN ANIMAtion, out of fashion in the computer age, experienced a rescue worthy of a fairy tale last week, when Walt Disney animators announced they would bring back the art form to the big screen. "We will be bringing back hand-drawn (two-dimensional) films," said Disney's Ed Catmull, the President of Pixar and Disney Feature Animation. Animators refer to hand-drawn animation as "two dimensional," as opposed to computer-generated animation, referred to as 3D.

Reuters

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE CLEANER	2 THE HOLIDAY	3 HANNIBAL RISING	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 NIGHT AT HE MUSEUM	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 THX HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE HISTORY BOYS	5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	6 THE HOLIDAY	7 APOCALYPTO
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 APOCALYPTO	2 THE HOLIDAY		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE MESSENGERS GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 THE HISTORY BOYS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS	2 HANNIBAL RISING		
	3 THE MESSENGERS	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 APOCALYPTO	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER		
	3 THE CLEANER	4 HANNIBAL RISING	5 THE MESSENGERS	

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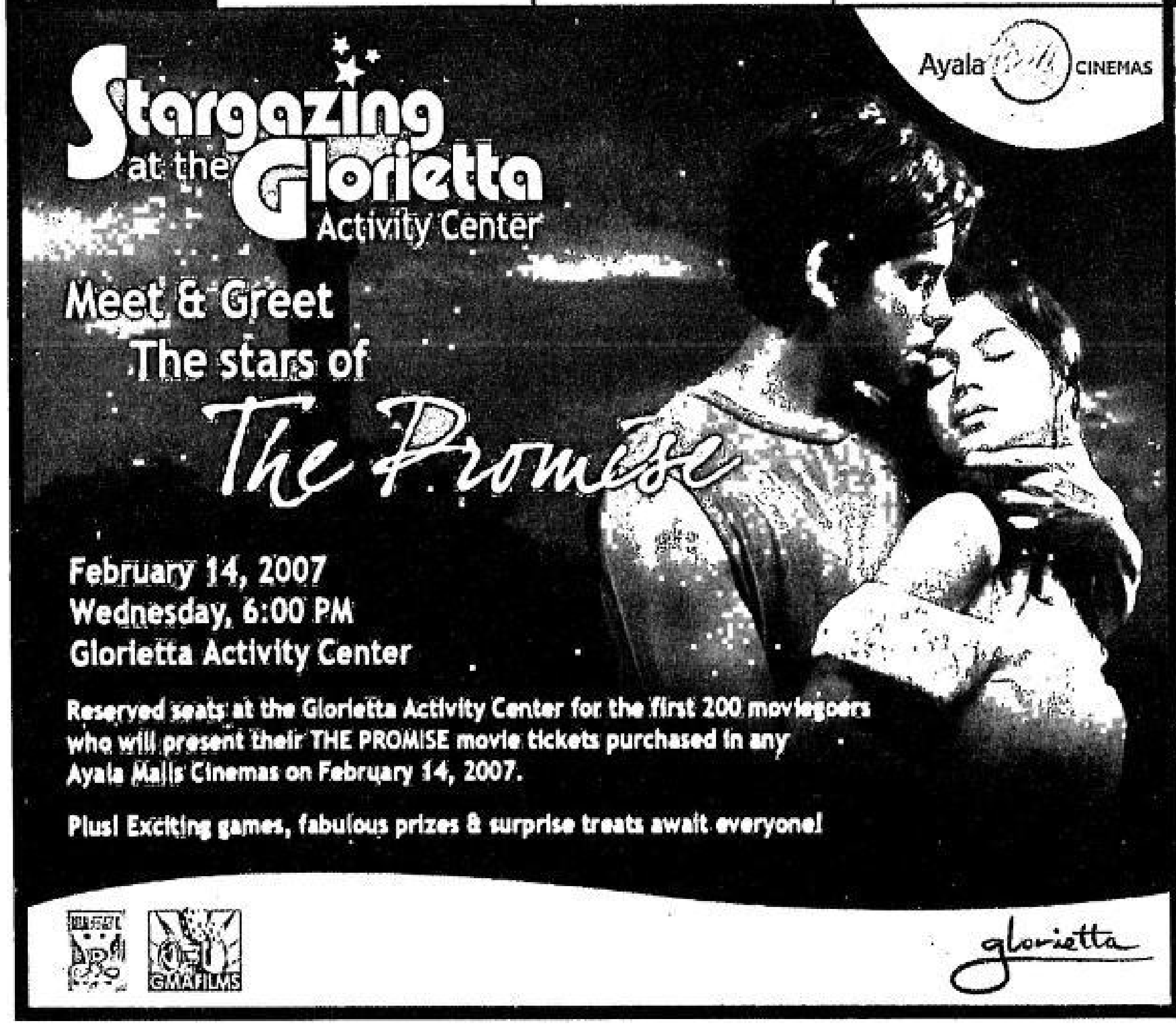

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GMA FILMS
glorietta

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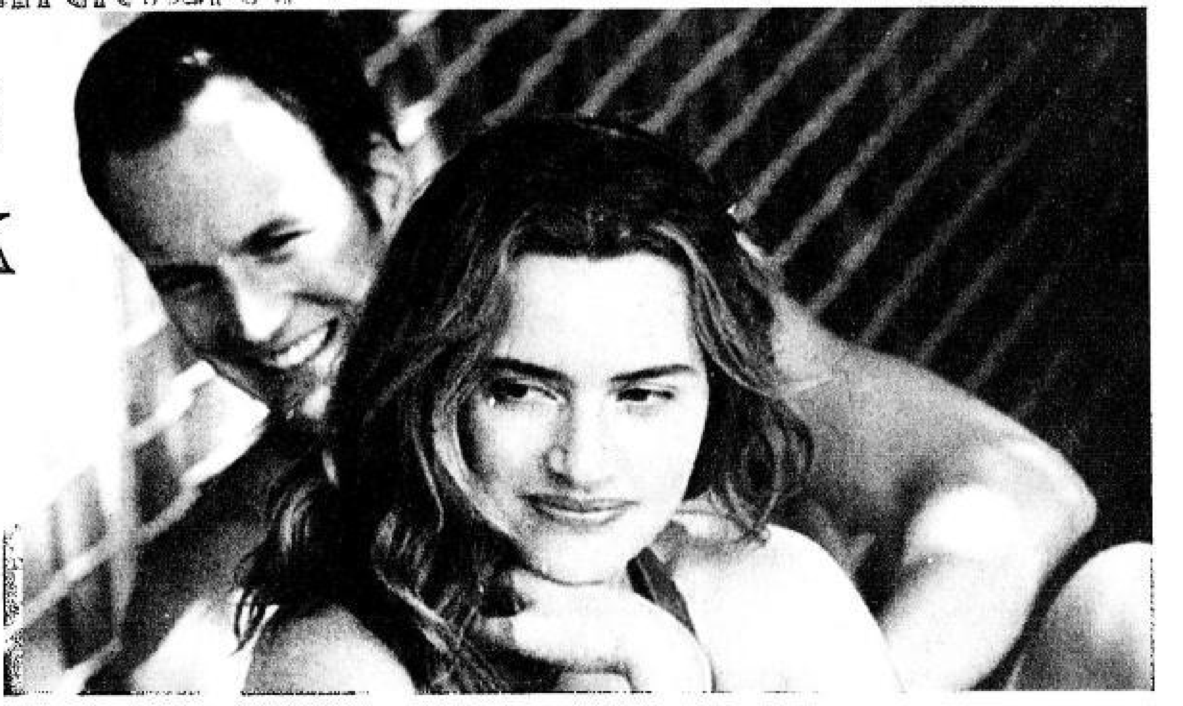
Int'l film season begins; Chinese treats this week


"LITTLE CHILDREN"

By Constantino C. Tejero

AFTER A SATIETY OF SILLY movies at the Metro Manila Film Festival, which culminated with monstrous blunders at awards night, intelligent Filipino moviegoers are now being treated to a grand buffet of international cinema.

Worthwhile

With the Golden Globe winners and Oscar nominees out, a rash of worthwhile foreign-language movies is taking over the cineplex, among them Zhang Yimou's "Curse of the Golden Flower," Todd Field's "Little Children," Alejandro Gonzáles Iñárritu's "Babel," Mel Gibson's "Apocalypto," Allen Coulter's "Hollywoodland," Nicholas Hytner's "The History Boys," Edward Zwick's "Blood Diamond," Davis Guggenheim's "An Inconvenient Truth," Marc Forster's "Stranger Than Fiction," Luc Besson's "Arthur and the Invisibles," Darren Aronofsky's "The Fountain," Ridley Scott's "A Good Year," Shawn Levy's "Night at the Museum."

> Illiterate movies corrupt. They have no place in a literate film culture.

"HOLLYWOODLAND"

The foreign-film festival season kicked off late last month with Cinema Australia at the Videotheque of the University of the Philippines Film Institute. Presented by the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, it screened low-budget but award-winning films such as "Romper Stomper," "The Finished People," "The Boys," "Proof."

The organizers, presumably aware that the biggest percentage of the movie-going public comprised children, had extended the festival to Ayala Museum with the screening of Cinema Australia for Kids.

For kids

This one featured youth-oriented movies such "BMX Bandits," starring the young Nicole Kidman; "Magic Pudding," the animated version of the classic Australian children's book, featuring the voice talents of Geoffrey Rush, Hugo Weaving, Toni Collette; and "Koala Brothers," a puppet-style animation.

This month, in celebration of the lunar Chinese New Year, the Ricardo Leong Center for Chinese Studies of Ateneo de Manila University is presenting the Spring Film Festival on Feb. 15-18, with screenings at 1 pm-9 pm, in Cineplex 10 of Gateway at the Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City.

Hot brew

With five Chinese movies and one Singaporean, this appears to be a hot brew of romance, comedy, drama and action, with one animation thrown in.

To be screened are: "Sunflower," by Zhang Yang; "The Monkey King," by Toon Wang; "Xanda," by Marco Mak; "Little Red Flowers," by Zhang Yuan; "Shanghai Dreams," by Wang Xiaoshuai; and "I Not Stupid," by Jack Neo.

For those who find Chinese-speaking movies exotic and are loath to read subtitles, we whole-

INT'L/ F3

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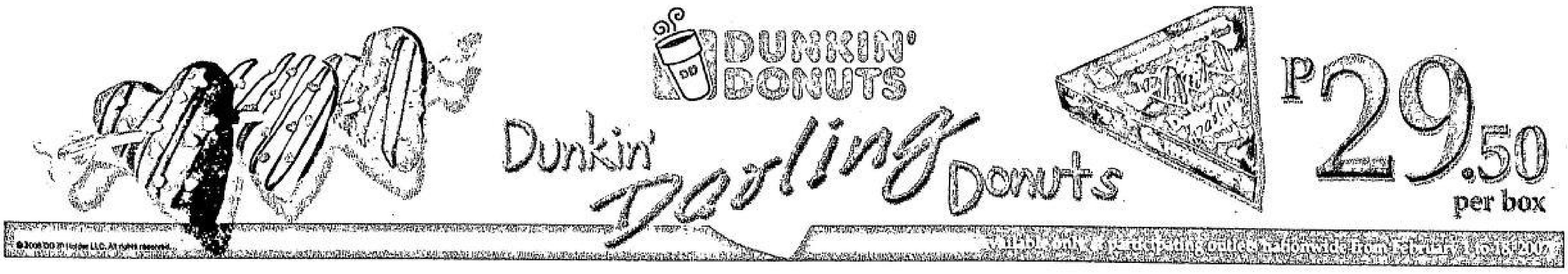
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While sales slide, stars set to party at Grammys

Each day brings more bad news for the $21B industry, which can't work out how to get fans to pay $18 for a CD instead of stealing music from the Web

LOS ANGELES—THE BIGGEST STARS OF the music world are gathering in Los Angeles for Sunday's Grammy Awards, while the business slides deeper into the abyss.

Every day brings more bad news for the $21-billion industry, which cannot work out how to get fans to pay $18 for a CD instead of stealing music from the Web.

Just this week, Grammy-winning jazz singer Norah Jones' much-anticipated new album opened at No. 1 on the US pop charts, but its sales were less than half those of its predecessor three years ago.

Worse than expected

Warner Music Group Corp.—home of Madonna and James Blunt—reported a worse-than-expected 74 percent slide in first quarter profits. And EMI Group Plc., home of Coldplay and Robbie Williams, laid off a number of US staffers.

Still, don't expect the bad tidings to infect the Grammys, which begin at 8 p.m. EST (0100 GMT Monday) at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

(Studio 23 has announced it is airing the program live today, at 8 a.m. and Star World, at 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.)

"It's not really the time to say, 'We don't know how to sell albums anymore. Please help us,'" said Craig Marks, editor in chief at music magazine Blender.

This year, the leading nominees are R&B singer Mary J. Blige with eight nominations and California rock band the Red Hot Chili Peppers with six.

Predicting the winners in any of the 108 categories is always a risky task. Last year everyone expected eight-time nominee Mariah Carey to be the belle of the ball on the strength of her successful comeback album. She won three prizes.

Blige was a surprise omission from the coveted Album of the Year race, where the Chili Peppers will compete against country trio the Dixie Chicks, pop duo Gnarls Barkley, rock crooner John Mayer and pop star Justin Timberlake.

The Dixie Chicks, with five nominations, are favorites for "Taking the Long Way," their first studio album since singer Natalie Maines stirred up a hornet's nest by criticizing President George W. Bush in 2003. The album's sales disappointed.

"For reasons having nothing to do with music, it never really got a chance to be all that it could be," said Rick Rubin, the album's producer.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

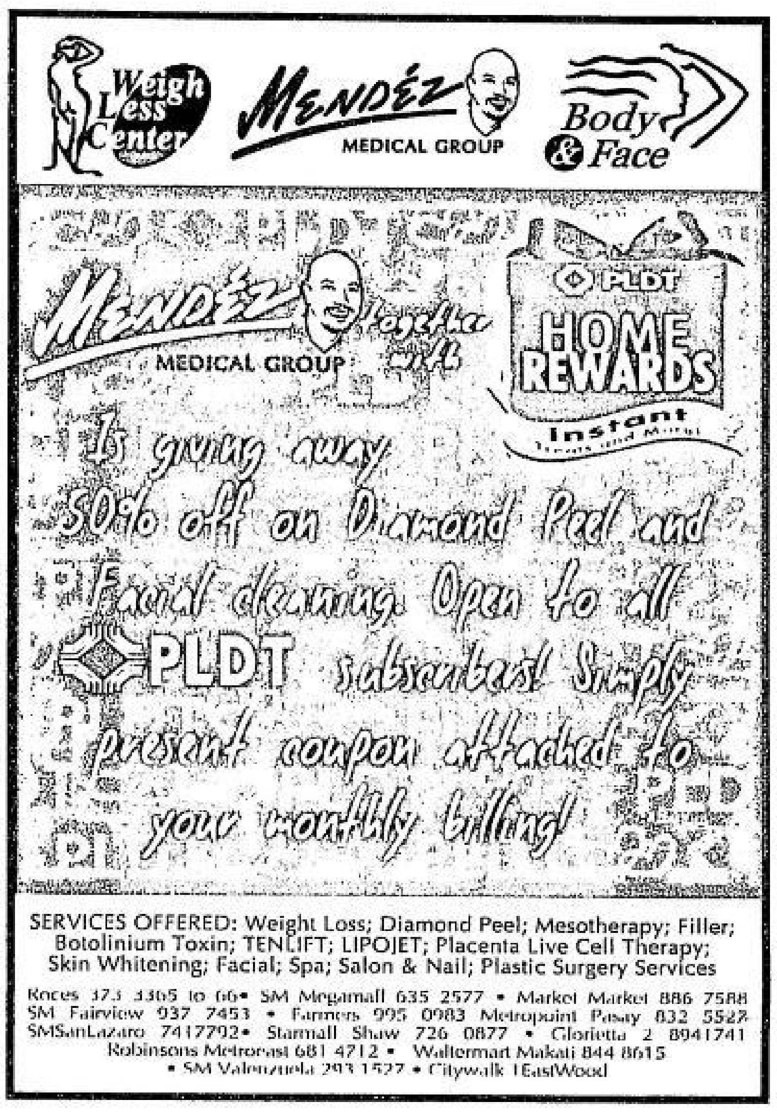
JOHN MAYER REUTERS

Neil Young's first

The 11,000-plus industry professionals who vote on the Grammys are supposed to favor artistry over sales. And the Chicks' album was hailed by critics for its sassy tone—as summed up by the Record and Song of the Year nominee "Not Ready to Make Nice"—and musical adventurousness.

If Grammy voters are feeling particularly political, they could also honor Neil Young for his anti-Bush album "Living With War," which yielded three rock nominations. The Canadian singer/songwriter, who has never won a Grammy, recorded his state-of-the-union album in six days last year and quickly uploaded the songs to his Web site.

WHILE/ G2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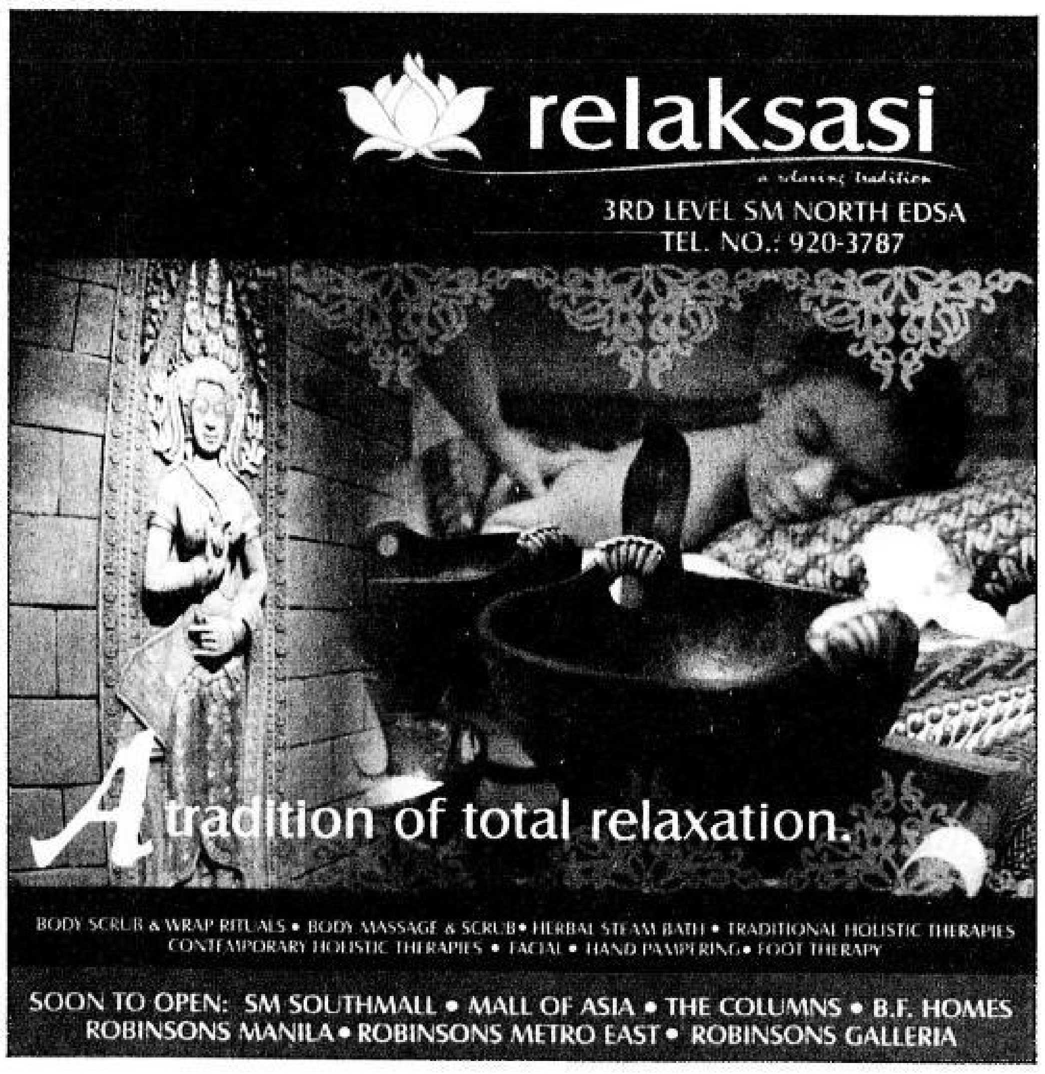
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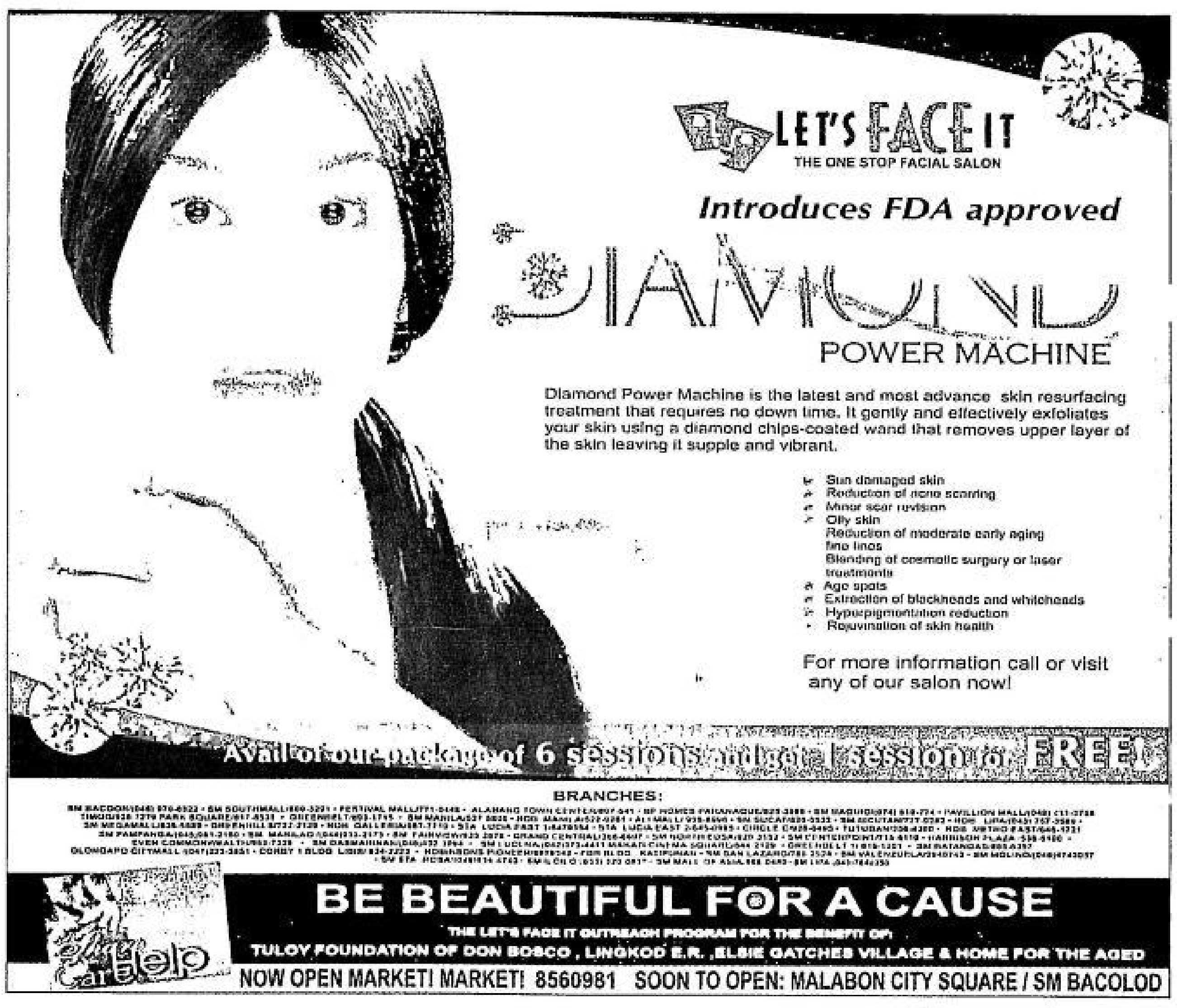
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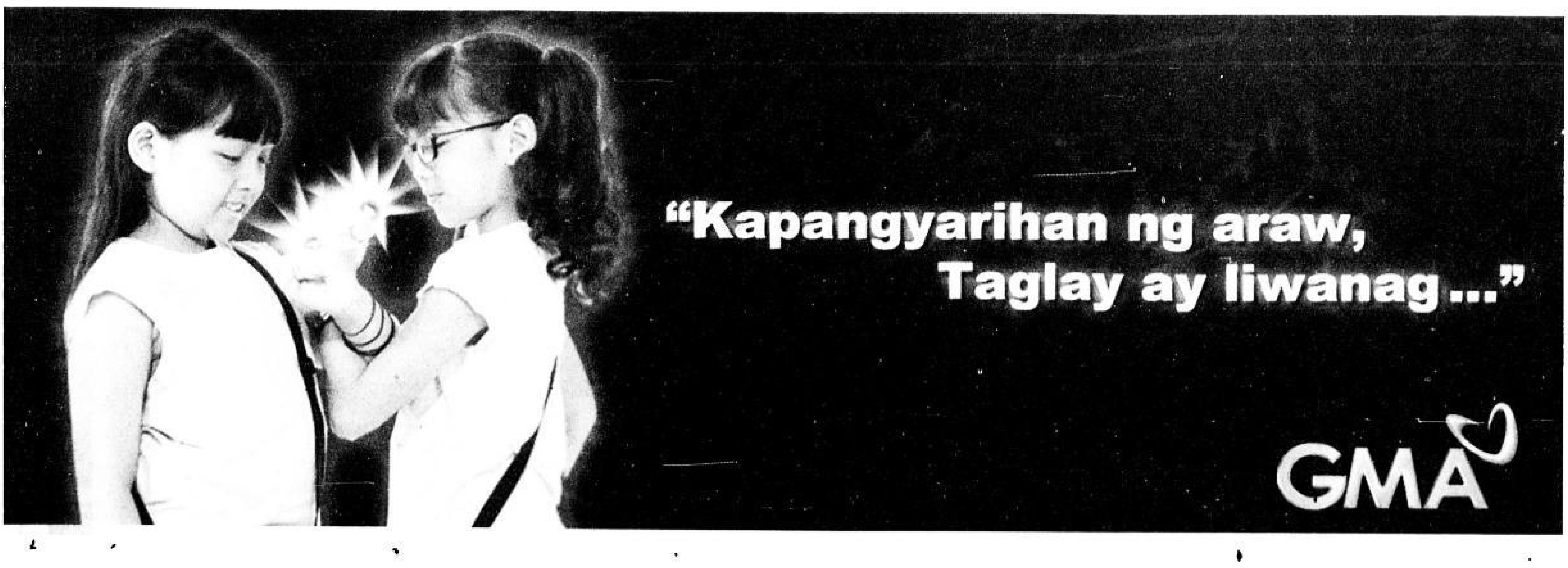
"Kapangyarihan ng araw,
Taglay ay liwanag..."
GMA

A race lost to 'American Idol'

LOS ANGELES—THE GRAMMYS, THE MUSIC INDUSTRY'S biggest bash, has lost the TV popularity race to "American Idol."

Last year, the two shows went head-to-head on a Wednesday. "Idol" pulled in almost 29 million viewers; the Grammys sank to a record low, 17 million (Nielsen Media Research).

The Grammys may be short on tone-deaf singers and vicious judges, but they occasionally have their moments:

DID YOU KNOW...

2006—Reclusive funk music pioneer Sly Stone makes his first major public appearance in almost 13 years.

2005—Ray Charles wins five posthumous awards.

2004—Stroke-afflicted Luther Vandross wins four Grammys.

2000—Guitar virtuoso Carlos Santana wins eight Grammys, tying Michael Jackson's 16-year-old record for "Thriller." *Reuters*

The prize: Stage spot with Timberlake

BURBANK, CALIFORNIA—FLANKED BY A television crew, three young women huddle around a keyboard on an airy sound stage trying to outsing each other.

"American Idol"? Close.

It's "My Grammy Moment," the recording academy's mini-edition of reality TV; a talent search for unsigned artists that maybe could offer a little ratings help for the Grammys show on Sunday night.

Last year was the least-watched Grammy Awards telecast going back to the 1970s.

This year, the live Grammycast is not up against "Idol," which edged it out in 2006, but the question of its ability to rebound in the ratings still hangs over it. No surprise, one answer producers turned to was to try to grab a little of the "Idol" magic.

Three finalists

"My Grammy Moment's" three finalists, the ones huddled this day around the keyboard—30-year-old Africa Miranda of Montgomery, Alabama, 22-year-old Brenda Radney of Staten Island, New York, and 18-year-old Robyn Trout of Houston, Texas—are vying for the chance to sing onstage at the show with sexy nominee Justin Timberlake.

Since January, the public has voted online at Yahoo! Music for their favorites of an Academy-selected pool of 12 contestants, narrowing down the field. What is now three will be one on Grammy night, to be announced live before her performance with Timberlake.

But will the contest actually boost the show's TV audience?

Phil Gallo of Daily Variety said the Grammys need to pick up three to six million more viewers, and "My Grammy Moment" does not guarantee anything.

"Running a contest via the Internet and coming up with the reward of a performance certainly reeks of `American Idol' influence," Gallo said. "I don't think a singing contest will get more viewers unless people are really following along and there's this incredible payoff. This is probably going to end up, 'OK, this is nice. They let this girl sing with Justin.'"

Still, KC Morton, the manager of soul singer Cee-Lo of the Grammy-nominated troupe Gnarls Barkley, said the contest represents a great way to bring in younger viewers.

"It's a mature type of event, the Grammys. You have to be dressed up. (The contest) brings it down to that MTV level, to get the youth more involved," he said.

Recording Academy President Neil Portnow looked beyond ratings when talking about "My Grammy Moment." He cited the contest's double agenda of "promoting music education for young people and creating some interactivity."

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

The recognition, he said, is that reality shows, and not just "Idol," have besieged viewers.

"For us, one of the particular challenges with planning this contest was that the Grammy voting process is by peers, members of the voting group of the Academy's membership. We wanted to maintain the integrity of that process, and involve the public," he said.

That, Gallo asserted, is one major issue facing the Grammy Awards.

"The toughest question for the Grammys is how do you distinguish that you want to do something new and different from the fact that your true mission is to honor the best," he said.

Mind-whirling

For Miranda, Radney and Trout (who had tried out for "Idol"), merely being given the possible opportunity to sing onstage with "the best" represents a mind-whirling dream.

On Tuesday, the women spoke to The Associated Press just before rehearsing two tunes for the show: one, a classic soul number, and the other, an R&B hit from Timberlake's Grammy-nominated soul-pop hybrid "FutureSex/LoveSounds."

Trout, with a melodic purr resembling her R&B idol Aaliyah, said that the fact that people from her hometown of Houston have been so excited about her "My Grammy Moment" status has been a "big shock."

Radney, sporting a rich vibrato honed from vocal jazz training and gospel roots, espoused her love of rock and hip-hop, from U2 to Timbaland.

Miranda, who lives in New York City, has been trying to "make it" professionally for the past eight years.

"In this business you live and die by your entertainment age. So that's one thing that almost kept me from entering the contest," she said. "I just turned 30 on Christmas Eve. I was so depressed. But now, I've never been more comfortable in my own skin." *AP*

While sales slide, stars . . .

From page G1

"No one has come out like him, or like Arlo Guthrie, and written about America and what it means to be an American," said Tom Araya, vocalist with hard rock band Slayer.

His band is nominated in the metal category for "Eyes of the Insane," a tune inspired by the true story of an Iraq war soldier who committed suicide shortly before he was due to return home.

In the closely watched race for Best New Artist, Blender's Marks predicted 27-year-old English singer/songwriter Corinne Bailey Rae would take the prize on the strength of her jazz-influenced self-titled debut album.

"She's a 'sophisticated' singer and artist, and that's the kind of artist the Grammys like to think of themselves as promoting," he said. *Reuters*

DIXIE CHICKS AP

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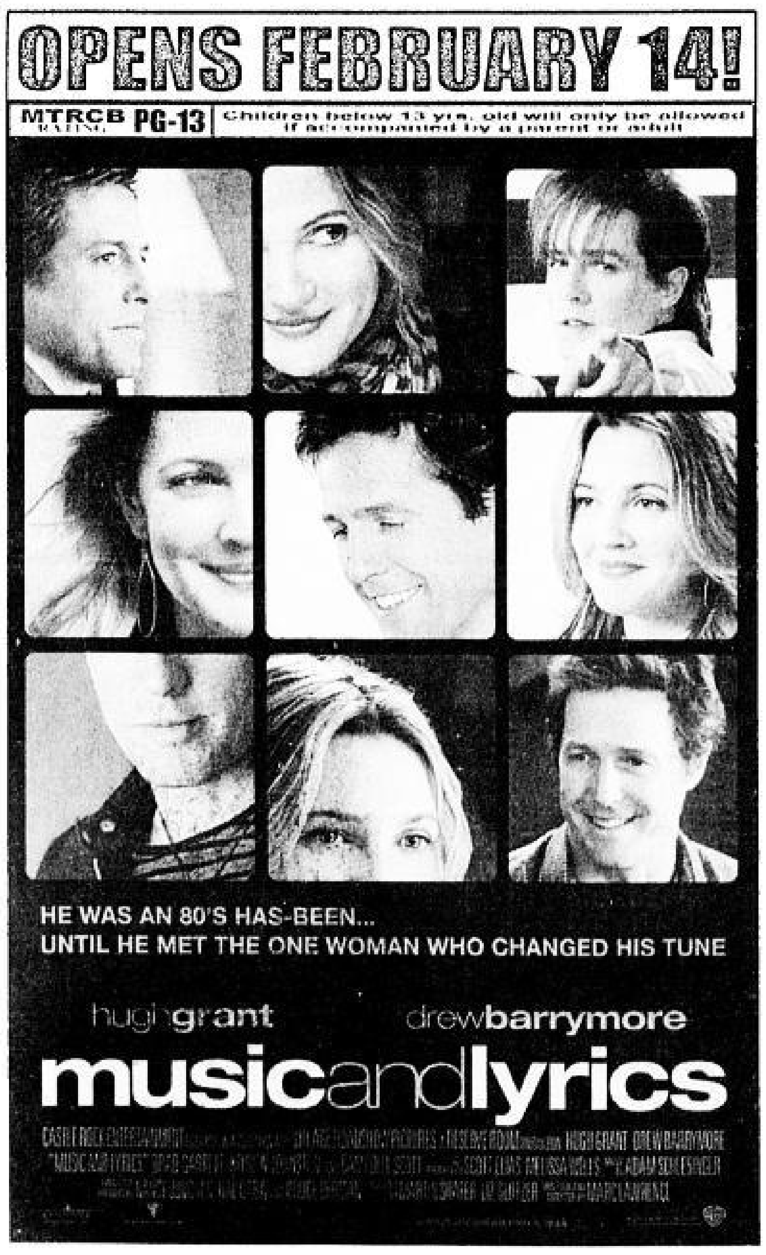
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
1 HANNIBAL RISING 2:45, 5:40, 8:25, 11:05 R-18
2 THE HOLIDAY 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10 PG-13
3 APOCALYPTO 2:20, 5:20 R-18 | NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 8:30, 11:00 G
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER 12:55, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30, 11:00 PG-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
CODE NAME: THE CLEANER PG13 6:00,8:00,10:00
CHARLOTTE'S WEB G 12:20
APOCALYPTO R18 2:30
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30
THE MESSENGERS PG13 2:30,4:30,6:30,8:30
HANNIBAL RISING R18 2:50,5:20,7:50
THE HOLIDAY PG13 1:55,4:45,7:35,10:25
MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-14404!
MATINNEE 110.00 FREE SEATING SCREENING BEFORE 5:00P.M. – MONDAY-FRIDAY



OPENS FEBRUARY 14!
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
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UNTIL HE MET THE ONE WOMAN WHO CHANGED HIS TUNE
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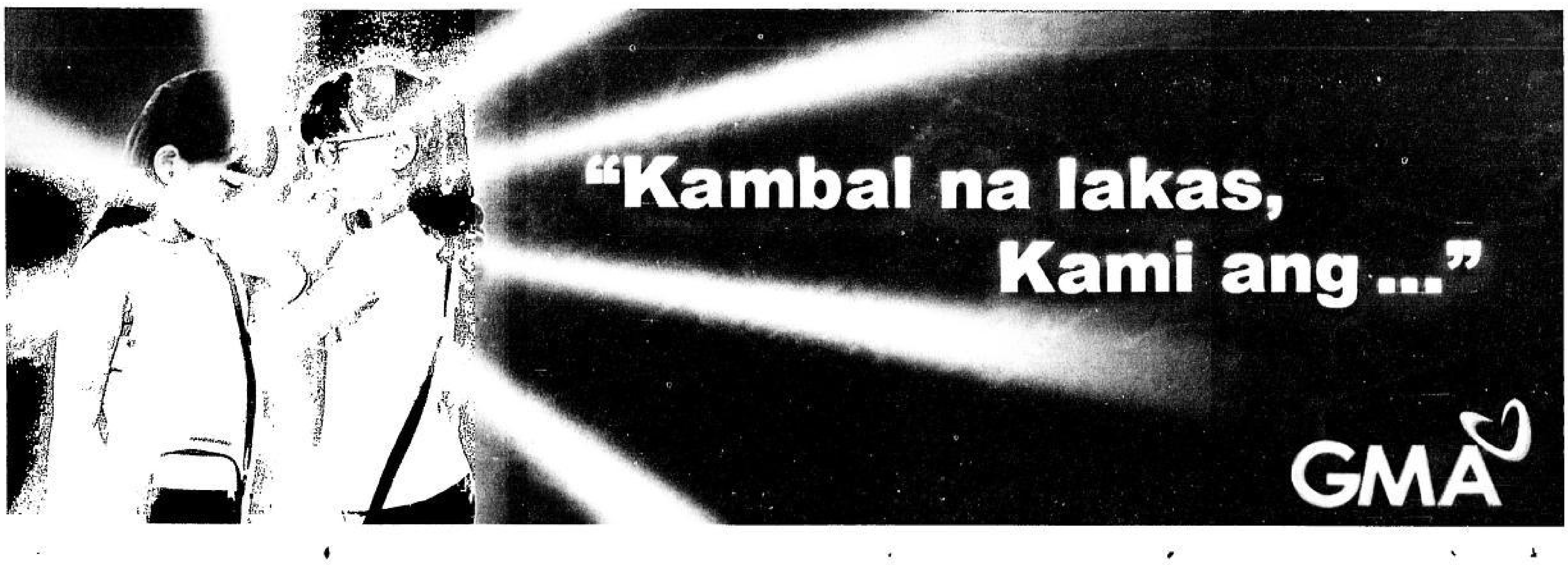
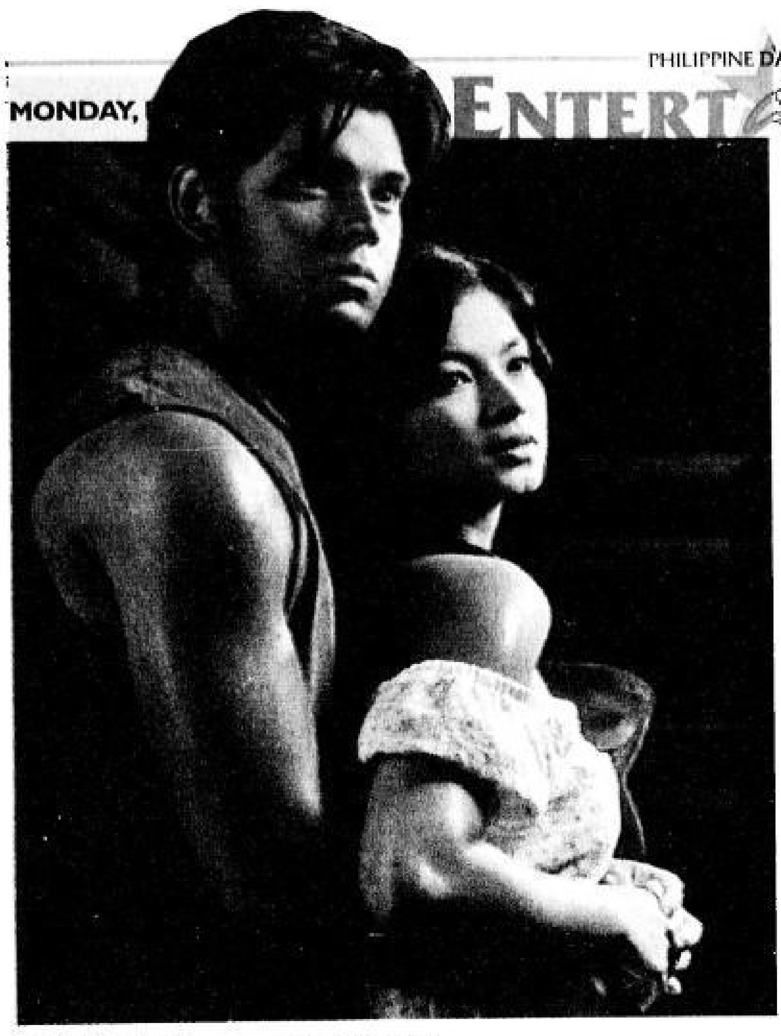


"Kambal na lakas,
Kami ang ..."
GMA



RICHARD Gutierrez and Angel Locsin in "The Promise"

Richard says he'd rather be 'normal'

He's determined to take a two-week break soon, flying to the US, no less

By Nini Valera

RICHARD GUTIERREZ ENVIES HIS TWIN brother Raymond.

"Raymond has been everywhere (in the world)," Richard told INQUIRER Entertainment. "I envy his freedom, his life."

The actor, who plays one of his most challenging roles in the film "The Promise," an adaptation of Emily Bronte's gothic novel "Wuthering Heights," said he would "do a Raymond" for two weeks, starting Feb. 17.

Flying away

"I will be going to LA and New York and be a normal person for 10 to 15 days," he said. "This is my first time to go to New York, and I intend to relish the experience. Every year, after a series ends for me, I try to take 15 days off work. But they have asked me this time to shorten [my break]."

Tapings for "Lupin," his new series to be aired on GMA 7, has gotten in the way of his vacation, Richard said.

He has also been given an expanded role as one of the hosts of "SOP," which his handlers fear might result in overexposure.

"But we've addressed that," said Richard. "My team and GMA 7 have plans to limit my appearance. *Pasulput-sulpot lang ako*."

He has likewise been prodded to hone his vocal abilities, although he admitted he had no time for voice lessons. He said he really had no confidence when it comes to singing.

"Dad (Eddie) was the Elvis Presley of the Philippines. I'm nowhere near that," the young actor admitted.

Matinee idol

Once described by director Mac Alejandre as the only true matinee idol after Richard Gomez and Gabby Concepcion, Richard said he was flattered by the description but that he was not inclined to compare himself to other actors.

"I just do my job," he said. "But I would like to be a role model to this generation."

He described his role in "The Promise" as one that he had been waiting for, and the movie as one that "the youth today should be watching."

Playing the passionate Daniel (Heathcliff in Bronte's book) to Angel's Andrea (Catherine), Richard admitted that his love scenes with his co-star had made his heart beat faster.

"At the time we shot the love scenes—there were two of them—it was real for me," he said. "The first one was very tentative, very experimental, since we were just in the process of discovering each other. The second one was all about passion."

With respect

But he insisted that he had treated Angel with respect.

"We were both very professional about the scenes," he said. "I'm very proud that I did these with Angel."

It is Richard's first time to tackle an "adult role" such as Heathcliff's dark, smoldering persona.

During interviews, both Richard and Angel have lately been playing off a possible real-life love angle. Richard has even been wearing one half of a pair of diamond studs that belongs to Angel.

"This is my lucky charm," he said, referring to the stud, which he wears on his right ear. "I told Angel I would get her a better one. She's blooming now. This is the only time I've seen her that way."

The two would be spending Valentines' Day together. "Touring the malls together to promote the movie," Richard said. "It's no date for us."

SHANG CINEPLEX

① THE HOLIDAY
MTRCB PG-13
1 00, 4.00, 7:00, 10:00

② CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2.45, 5.05 MTRCB: GP
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 25, 10 00 MTRCB GP

③ CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
MTRCB R-13
2:15, 4 50, 7:25, 10:00

④ HANNIBAL RISING
1 45, 4 30 MTRCB. R-18
APOCALYPTO
7.00, 10 00 MTRCB: R-18

PREMIERE THEATRE
THE MESSENGER
MTRCB PG-13
12 30, 2 45, 5 00, 7 15, 9:35

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6:05 , 8:20 , 10:35
PG-13

CINEMA 2 THE HOLIDAY
12:10 , 3:10 , 6:10
9:10
PG-13

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PROMENADE
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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
11:15 , 2:00 , 4:40
7:20 , 10:00
R-13

CINEMA 4 HANNIBAL RISING
11:30 , 2:15 , 5:00
7:45 , 10:30
R-18

CINEMA 5 THE HOLIDAY
10:40 , 1:35 , 4:30
7:25 , 10:20
PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

Feb 13 & 14 , 2007	OGIE ALCASID AND AI - AI	8:00 PM
Feb 16 & 17 , 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM
March 06 , 2007	EDNA LEDESMA " DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS "	8:00 PM

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EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
Feb. 06 & 20 , 2007	DYORDS KO PO	8:00 PM
February 11 , 2007	LOVI POE "A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION"	9:00 PM
Feb. 13 & 14 , 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

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SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
1 (DOLBY) THE HOLIDAY
2 (DOLBY) CHARLOTTE'S WEB
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 (DOLBY) HANNIBAL RISING
APOCALYPTO
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) THE MESSENGER

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 THE HOLIDAY
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 APOCALYPTO
4 HANNIBAL RISING

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 HANNIBAL RISING
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
1 AGENT X 44
2 HANNIBAL RISING
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 APOCALYPTO

THEATRES
Telephone No. (044) 600 3025
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM/A GOOD YEAR
2 AGENT X 44
3 FEAST

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 SAW - 3
BLOOD DIAMOND/DECK THE HALL
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 CODENAME CLEANER
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 APOCALYPTO
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 THE MESSENGERS
7 HANNIBAL RISING
CHARLOTTE'S WEB/BLOOD DIAMOND
BLOOD CHOCOLATE/ERAGON
10 AGENT X 44

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 (DOLBY) THE MESSENGER
3 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE MESSINGERS
4 CODENAME CLEANER
5 HANNIBAL RISING

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 TENACIOUS - D
2 ABNORMAL BEAUTY
3 JUNDARA
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 AGENT X 44
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 HANNIBAL RISING

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
1 SAW - 3
DECK THE HALLS/BLOOD DIAMOND

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 THE MESSINGERS
2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 HAPPY FEET

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) HANNIBAL RISING
2 (DOLBY) THE HOLIDAY
3 (DOLBY) APOCALYPTO
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 THE RETURN
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 LITTLE CHILDREN
2 AGENT X 44
3 SPIRIT TRAP
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM / A GOOD YEAR
2 AGENT X 44
3 BOA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 AGENT X 44

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 CODENAME CLEANER
2 TAGINIT
3 BALAHIBONG PUSA
4 SAW-3

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 TENACIOUS - D
2 MAPANUKSO
3 THE RETURN
4 KALABIT
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 CHECK IN
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 ARTHURE & THE INVISIBLE
4 TENACIOUS - D

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SAW-3
2 SYA AY NAGDADALAGA

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- SM Cinema's LoveFest runs on February 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20
- Movies and activities may vary from branch to branch.
- Contact your nearest SM Cinema for the details.

Distributed by Warner Bros. Inc. and 20th Century Fox Films
MTRCB Rating: R-13
SM CINEMA
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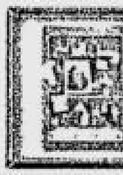

CATCH AND RELEASE
Distributed by Columbia Pictures
MTRCB Rating: PG-13
Catch the movie on the following dates at these SM Cinemas:
February 14 to 20 at North EDSA
February 21 to 27 at SM Megamall
February 28 to March 6 at Mall of Asia
March 7 to 13 at Manila

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
IMAX
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
1:00PM 3:30PM 6:00PM 8:30PM
Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250
1 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 DEJA VU
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 LOVE FEST 2007
5 THE CLEANER
6 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE/

PREMIERE CINEMA
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CENTERSTAGE
THE MESSENGER

PODIUM
CINEMA 1
THE HOLIDAY
CINEMA 2
THE CLEANER
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 THE HOLIDAY
2 BABEL
3 ERAGON
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
9 LOVE FEST 2007
10 AGENT X44
11 THE MESSENGER
12 THE CLEANER

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 THE HOLIDAY
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 THE MESSENGER
5 THE CLEANER
6 BABEL
7 DEJA VU
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
9 AGENT X44
10 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
11 ROB-B-HOOD
12 LOVE FEST 2007

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 DEJA VU
3 THE CLEANER
4 LOVE FEST 2007
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 THE MESSENGER
7 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
9 THE HOLIDAY
10 AGENT X44
11 BLOOD DIAMOND
12 ERAGON

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 LOVE FEST 2007
2 THE MESSENGER
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
7 THE CLEANER
8 AGENT X44
9 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
10 THE INVINCIBLE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 THE MESSENGER
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 LOVE FEST 2007
6 THE CLEANER

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 LOVE FEST 2007
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 THE MESSENGER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 THE CLEANER
6 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
7 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
8 BABEL
9 AGENT X44

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 THE MESSENGER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 THE MESSENGER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 LOVE FEST 2007
5 THE CLEANER
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 BLOOD DIAMOND
9 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
10 ERAGON
11 BABEL
12 AGENT X44

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 THE MESSENGER
2 ZU WARRIORS
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 THE HOLIDAY
2 THE MESSENGER
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 THE MESSENGER
5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
6 AGENT X44
7 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
8 THE HOLIDAY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 THE MESSENGER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
5 AGENT X44
6 SPIRIT TRAP

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 ZU WARRIORS
3 THE MESSENGER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 AGENT X44
4 FEAST

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 THE MESSENGER
3 AGENT X44
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
5 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
6 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 TENACIOUS D
2 AGENT X44
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 AGENT X44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
4 ZU WARRIORS

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 THE MESSENGER
3 BABEL
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE CLEANER
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
1 LOVE FEST 2007
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE MESSENGER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 BABEL
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 ERAGON
6 LOVE FEST 2007
7 AGENT X44
8 THE MESSENGER

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 RESERVED
3 LOVE FEST 2007
4 AGENT X44
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 RESERVED
8 SPIRIT TRAP

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
3 AGENT X44
4 THE MESSENGER
5 LOVE FEST 2007
6 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 LOVE FEST 2007
3 ZU WARRIORS
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR

MAXIMEDIA presents
MYMP In Love
THE VALENTINE CONCERT
February 14, 2007 · 8:30pm
THE CENTERSTAGE SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 9
Tickets at P500 - P800
(exclusive of 5% ticketron charge)
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TICKETWORLD 891-5610/891-9999
with special guest Top Suzara

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROUNDUP

'Inang Yaya' sweep

THE YOUNG CRITICS CIRCLE, AN ORGANIZATION COMPOSED OF academics and critics, has declared Unitel Pictures' "Inang Yaya" as the Best Picture winner for 2006.

YCC's Best Picture plum was awarded to "Yaya" directors Pablo Biglangawa and Veronica Velasco, according to YCC member Nonoy Lauzon.

Lead star Maricel Soriano topped the Best Performance category.

Lauzon told INQUIRER Entertainment that it was a clean sweep for "Inang Yaya," which also cinched Best Screenplay, Cinematography and Visual Design, Editing and Sound.

"Kubrador" was nominated for Best Cinematography and Visual Design and Editing, while "Kaleldo" received a Best Performance nomination for Cherry Pie Picache.

Other Best Performance nominees were the cast members of "Inang Yaya," which include child stars Tala Santos and Erika Oreta.

Awarding is on March 9 in UP Diliman's Faculty Center Conference Hall.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

'Bakekang' tops survey

The Sunshine Dizon TV starrer "Bakekang," directed by Carlo J. Caparas, posted 33.4 percent in viewership nationwide in GMA 7's latest TV survey.

It reportedly bested the Robin Padilla-Angel Locsin starrer "Asian Treasure" and "Jumong,"—both airing on GMA 7 as well—which posted 31.4 percent and 30.4 percent, respectively.

Ranked fourth is "Atlantika" (GMA) and "Maging Sino Ka Man" (ABS-CBN), with 27.1 percent and 25.3 percent, respectively.

The next top six shows are: "Sana Maulit Muli" (ABS-CBN), 23.9 percent; "24 Oras" (GMA), 23.9 percent; "Maala-ala Mo Kaya" (ABS-CBN), 22.4 percent; "TV Patrol" (ABS-CBN), 22.2 percent; "Deal or No Deal" (ABS-CBN), 22.1 percent; "Star Struck" (GMA), 21.7 percent; and "Bubble Gang" (GMA), 18.3 percent.

SUNSHINE Dizon and Carlo Caparas

'World's Untold Stories'

CNN International has teamed up with London-based documentary maker Journeyman Pictures to launch a new weekly 30-minute documentary strand, "World's Untold Stories."

The series launches on Feb. 17 with "The Very Thin Blue Line," which takes viewers inside a police training camp in Jordan where the instructors focus on survival.

Other documentaries are: "Land of Missing Children," Feb. 24 to 26; "A Tale of Two Women," March 3 to 5; and "Road to Terrorism, March 10 to 12.

"A TALE OF TWO WOMEN"

Air times are 3 a.m., 12 noon and 8 p.m., Saturdays.

Filmmaking workshop

A group of professional filmmakers will hold free digital filmmaking workshops from March 15 to April 15.

The workshop covers directing, cinematography, scriptwriting, editing, production design, location management, acting and producing.

A digital camera is a must for workshop participants.

Interested parties may call (049) 808-1736 or email almed_garcia@yahoo.com.

'Dreamgirls' events

Robinsons malls pay tribute to the multi-awarded film version of "Dreamgirls," the latest offering of United International Pictures.

A series of events kicks off on Feb. 16 with a "Drive-By, Stick-On Activity" and a free concert courtesy of Wave 89.1 and capped with the film's advance screening on Feb. 17 at Robinsons Galleria Cinema 1.

Inspired by the Broadway hit of the same title, the film casts Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy, Beyonce Knowles, Anika Noni Rose and Jennifer Hudson.

"DREAMGIRLS"

New host

Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo joins media as host of the radio program "Usapang Segurado," which airs every Saturday, 12 noon over DWIZ 882 AM.

The show aims to promote public awareness of the importance of insurance and how it works to protect one's life, well-beings and belongings.

'Indie o Hindi' symposium

National Artist for Film Eddie Romero heads a panel of guest speakers who will take up the subject of independent cinema when Cinema as Art Movement (CAM) celebrates Fine Arts Week with a symposium titled "Indie o Hindi, separating the chaff from the grain and why independent filmmaking is here to stay."

Guest panelists are filmmaker Raymond Red, actor/director/producer Cesar Montano, director Quark Henares and film critic Alexis Tioseco. Moderator is writer/filmmaker Erwin Romulo, founding member of CAM.

It is set on Feb. 15, 2 p.m. at the UP College of Fine Arts Garden, UP Diliman.

War of the Chrysanthemums

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

ZHANG YIMOU'S LATEST OPUS IS set again in olden times. And as with other recent Chinese epics, it's about a royal family harboring dirty, scandalous secrets.

It seems that stories set in the Tang Dynasty, like "Curse of the Golden Flower," often find their core pathos in a terribly problematic family dynamic, which partly bemoans the burdens of being powerful and wealthy. The heavily soap-ish twists and turns are a given, but they're masterfully done by the filmmaker, who previously tackled star-crossed romance and treachery—simultaneously with massive, artful carnage—in "House of Flying Daggers" and "Hero."

REVIEW

Familial dysfunction

Over-decorated but still visually enticing, "Curse of the Golden Flower" opulently presents a tale of serious familial dysfunction: The aging Emperor (Chow Yun Fat) is preparing to choose a rightful heir to the throne among his three sons. The favored son, Prince Wan (Liu Ye), who secretly had an affair with the ailing, stepmother Empress (Gong Li), is now fooling around with the imperial doctor's daughter Chan (Li Man). This, of course, makes the lovelorn queen jealous, but Prince Wan, fearful of his father's wrath, keeps his distance.

Things go sour between the Emperor and the Empress when painful secrets about her health and their past are discovered, building to an emotional, climactic confrontation at the opening rites of the Chrysanthemum Festival.

"Curse of the Golden Flower" illustrates the interwoven personal dramas skillfully, even when the most stunning revelations are quite easily discernable. Heavy sulking often presages very intricate martial arts battle scenes, big-budgeted stunts that enhance the high-stakes imbroglios of the royal family.

As with the filmmaker's older works, there is consistent color coordination and bright palette schemes that show clear demarcation lines. Some examples include the fight between the gold- and silver-armored armies and the chrysanthemum-decked royal court. At times, there is just an overload of colors, as exemplified by the palace interiors, which have meticulously patterned tiles and tapestries and spectrum-hued columns.

Each of the characters possesses a discomfiting, threatening trait, and the actors just fit their ornately garbed roles impressively. There aren't new variations on the characters, however, as their personalities and tendencies are similar to those of recent epics.

Darkly comic

The aging king, for example, is still the unbeatable master swordsman, and a secretly calculating schemer. The hired spy (Chen Jin), a conveniently resurfaced figure from the past, knows the Emperor's Achilles' heel. Nevertheless, they, and other characters like the Empress' son Prince Jai (Jay Chou), and the youngest child, Prince Yu (Junjie Qin), figure importantly as pained people with agendas of their own.

"Curse of the Golden Flower" is practically devoid of humor, although it has darkly comic parts, particularly when certain revelations are made known to the audience prior to the involved characters themselves. Its visual richness compliments the filmmaker's creative storytelling, and majestically textures the tragic, betrayal-filled royal family feud.

JAY Chow as Prince Jie, Gong Li as the Empress and Chow Yun Fat as the Emperor

Plowing fertile familiar ground

NEW YORK—"THE MESSENGERS" WASN'T screened for critics before opening day, not because it's bad but because it's a horror movie, and horror movie fans don't read reviews anyway. Duh.

What it is, however, is derivative—a cross between "The Birds" and "The Amityville Horror," with some third-act sprinklings of "The Shining." If you're going to steal, you may as well choose quality source material, and Hong Kong brothers Danny and Oxide Pang have done just that in making their first English-language feature.

But working from a screenplay by Mark Wheaton, based on a story by Todd Farmer, the Pangs have added their own Asian-terror touches. (The identical twins are responsible for, among other movies, "The Eye," about a blind girl who receives a cornea transplant that allows her to see dead people. Tom Cruise and Paula Wagner's production company is remaking it.)

REVIEW

And so the ghosts who inhabit the creepy, creaky farm house in North Dakota crawl about with that familiar staccato scamper, their faces and bodies ashen, their hair black and stringy. If you've seen this image once, you've seen it a hundred times (in movies with the word "Ring" or "Grudge" in the title). It's still pretty unnerving.

While "The Messengers" is very *au courant* stylistically, it's pure old-school horror thematically: a haunted house in the middle of nowhere, a small town with weird locals, menacing crows that swoop and peck, and lots of sharp farm equipment just lying around, waiting to be used as a weapon.

The family

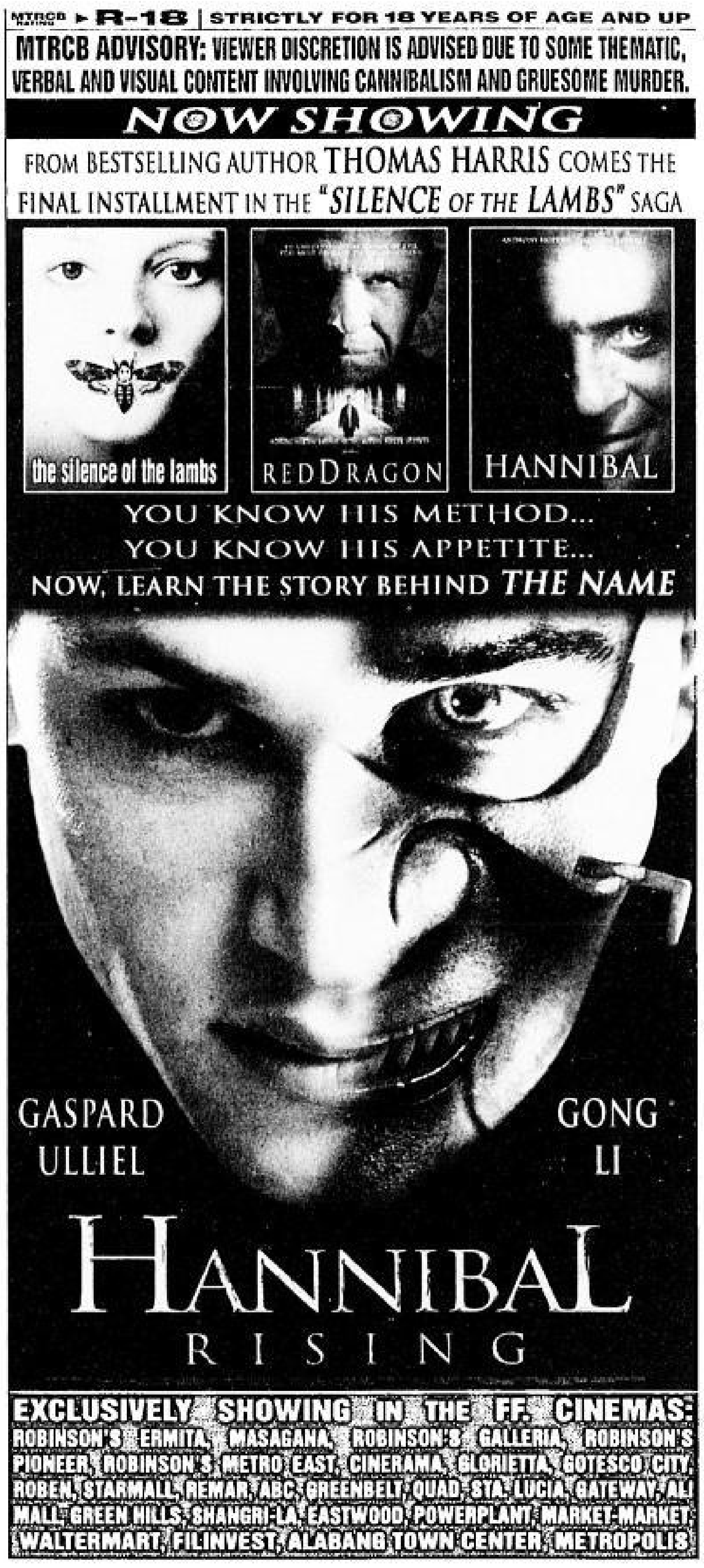
The Solomon family moves in after some unnamed trouble in Chicago, looking for a fresh start but clueless about the murders that took place in the house just a few years earlier. Dad Roy (Dylan McDermott) plans to harvest sunflowers. Mom Denise (Penelope Ann Miller) wants to spruce up the place.

Surly teenage daughter Jess (Kristen Stewart, who played Jodie Foster's daughter in "Panic Room") is less than thrilled about being uprooted from her friends.

Then there's 3-year-old Ben (played by Evan and Theodore Turner), who has stopped speaking but is perceptive enough to recognize that something supernatural lurks within the house, and is trying to contact them. He points and stares straight ahead or at the ceiling, looking cherubic all the while, which is pretty frightening in itself.

The Pangs let the action play out slowly, which is effective. Yes, even after John Corbett shows up as a drifter looking for work on the farm—a little too trigger-happy with his rifle when the birds start hovering.

It isn't until the end that things spin out of control. No one says "Gimme the bat, Wendy" or "Here's Johnny!" But they come close. *AP*



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1 HANNIBAL RISING 12:35 / 3:20 / 6:05 / 8:50
2 THE MESSENGERS 12:40 / 2:40 / 4:40 / 6:40 / 8:40
3 APOCALYPTO 12:10 R4 / 2:10 / 5:10 / 8:10
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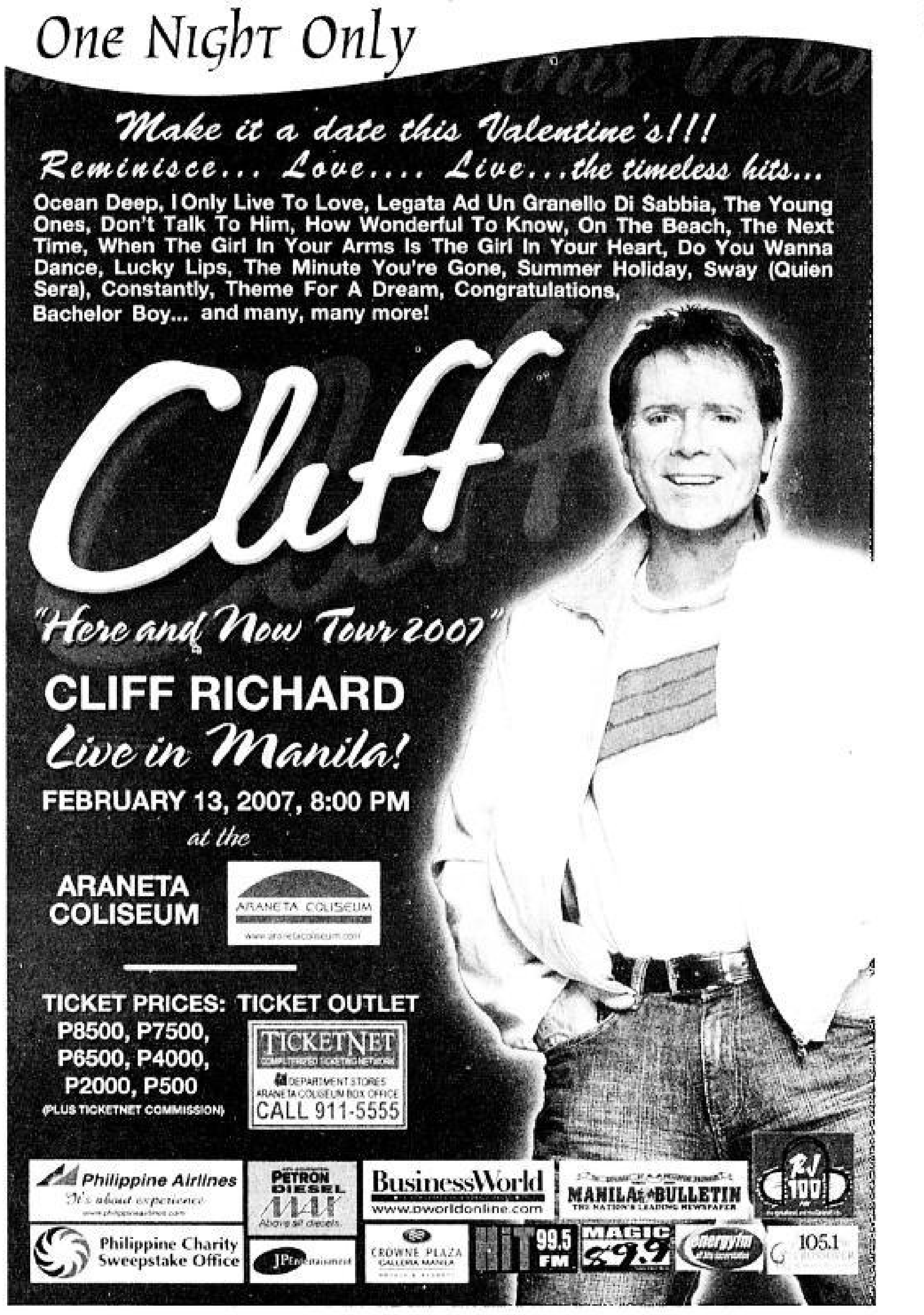

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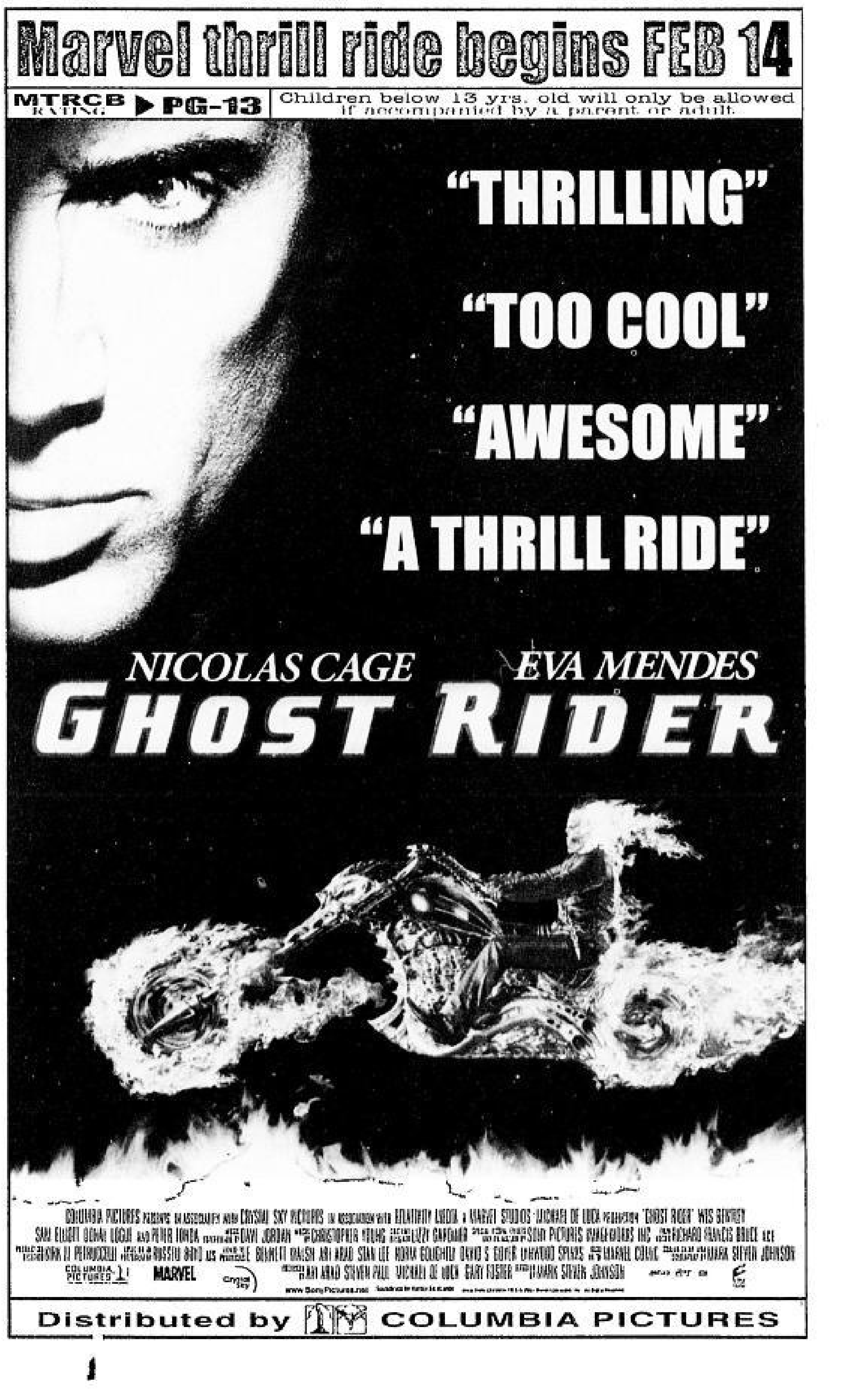

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Attractive but unsmiling woman with a sullen look

MEXIA, TEXAS—NIKKI HART STARES OUT of the Mexia High School's 1985 year book, an attractive but unsmiling young woman with a sullen look.

Long-time teachers in this small Texas town—population 6,563—vaguely recall the unspectacular student who grew up to be tabloid queen Anna Nicole Smith, Playboy Playmate and billionaire's widow who died on Thursday at the age of 39.

"I remember her but she went by Nikki Hart then. I really remember her more as the girl who worked at the fried chicken restaurant in town," said math teacher Glenn McGuire. "It's not like we're proud, you don't see signs when you come into town saying 'This is the home of Anna Nicole Smith.'"

Born Vickie Lynn Hogan in Houston, Nikki Hart was one of the many names Smith acquired over the course of a tumultuous and tragic life that saw her outlive her son but not survive long enough to lay undisputed claim to the estate of her late husband, billionaire J. Howard Marshall.

The town she left behind—a friendly but nondescript place set in flat cattle and natural gas country—has mixed feelings about its famous former resident.

"There are better things to be known for," Mexia High School principal Johnnie Cotton said.

Reuters

RUSHES

ANNA Nicole Smith, left, and when she was Nikki Hart, above. REUTERS

Another paternity claim

DANIA BEACH, FLORIDA—The mystery surrounding Anna Nicole Smith's death has cleared up only slightly, while the husband of an elderly ex-starlet added to the circus surrounding her life.

Broward County authorities said Friday no illegal drugs were found in the hotel room where the 39-year-old former centerfold collapsed Thursday, and that she had suffered no serious physical injury. But the medical examiner said it could take weeks to determine whether drugs or natural causes are to blame.

In Los Angeles, the husband of actress Zsa Zsa Gabor, Prince Frederic von Anhalt, said he had a decade-long affair with Smith and may be her infant daughter's father. The claim comes amid a paternity fight over the girl between Smith's former boyfriend and a lawyer whose name is on Dannielynn's birth certificate.

Smith's mother, Virgie Arthus, was reportedly in the Bahamas, checking on the welfare of her granddaughter, 5-month-old Dannielynn Hope Marshall Stern.

AP

Exactly what charges?

LOS ANGELES—Prosecutors were considering Thursday whether to charge Ryan O'Neal with assault with a deadly weapon for firing a gun during a brawl with his older son at the actor's Malibu home.

RYAN O'NEAL REUTERS

A sheriff's detective submitted results of an investigation to the Los Angeles County district attorney's office Wednesday. "The detective presented the charges that were based on the arrest but did not make a formal recommendation," said Lt. Steve Smith of the Malibu-Lost Hills sheriff's station.

The case was under review and it was unclear when or whether charges would be filed, said district attorney spokeswoman Jane Robison.

O'Neal, 65, was arrested at his Malibu home Feb. 3 for investigation of assault with a deadly weapon and negligent discharge of a firearm. He was freed on a $50,000 bond. The actor has said he fired a warning shot to scare his 42-year-old son, Griffin, who had attacked him with a fireplace poker.

AP

Polanski on Pompeii

LONDON—Oscar-winning director Roman Polanski is to team up with thriller writer Robert Harris to recreate the last days of Pompeii, the author told a British Sunday newspaper.

The Sunday Times said the epic's 100 million-pound (US$197 million) cost will make it the most expensive movie ever filmed in Europe.

Based on Harris's 2003 novel "Pompeii," the movie will recount events surrounding the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD, which led to the deaths of thousands of people engulfed by hot ash and collapsing buildings, the paper reported.

The Sunday Times said Polanski, 73, had asked Harris to write the script in eight weeks, and requested he boost the role of Corelia—a well-born Roman girl—to make it more appealing to younger audiences.

AP

That's my name!

NASHVILLE, Tennessee—Country singer Keith Urban, 39, is suing a painter also named Keith Urban, claiming the painter's Web site violates federal trademark laws.

KEITH URBAN AP

The lawsuit, filed Friday in US District Court, says Keith D. Urban of Wayne, New Jersey, is using his keithurban.com domain in a deceptive manner and for commercial purposes.

The Web site includes the statement, "You have reached the site of Keith Urban. To those who don't know, oil painting is one of my hobbies." It then directs viewers to a gallery of paintings and offers a limited edition of prints for sale.

The country singer, whose full name is Keith Lionel Urban, married actress Nicole Kidman last year.

AP

"Borat 2" on ice

LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK—Before Borat fans start giving each other high fives, 20th Century Fox wants to make clear that the boorish Kazakh journalist is not headed back to the big screen just yet.

Hours after News Corp. Chief Executive Rupert Murdoch told reporters on Thursday that British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen had signed a deal to make a sequel to his hit movie "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan," a studio spokesman said the idea was merely under consideration.

"We're eager to work with Sacha again, and we've had casual discussions about a sequel, which we'd love to do, but at this point, it remains too preliminary to discuss," said Chris Petrikin, News Corp.-owned 20th Century Fox spokesman.

Reuters

"Lost" to X-ray

HONOLULU—Film from ABC's hit show "Lost" was ruined when airport security screeners accidentally X-rayed the film's canister containers.

The TV crew had to reshoot, at a cost the producers would not mention.

The loss will not affect the broadcast schedule for the popular show filmed in Hawaii, co-executive producer Jean Higgins told The Honolulu Advertiser newspaper.

The incident occurred when the film canisters, sent as cargo, were mistakenly mixed with passenger luggage and sent through an X-ray machine at Honolulu International Airport.

AP

Lovesick astronaut

LOS ANGELES—The strange saga of the astronaut accused of trying to kill a rival for a colleague's affections will be turned into a movie.

Granada America has optioned the film rights to an article on Lisa Nowak, 43, who was arrested Monday and charged with attempted murder. Police say Nowak made a desperate, 1,448-km cross-country drive while wearing a diaper—to avoid bathroom breaks—to catch up with a woman she thought was involved with the man she loved.

"The chronicle of Lisa Marie Nowak has had a global impact and contains almost every dramatic element possible," Granada America CEO David Gyngell said Friday. "One could not imagine a more compelling story."

AP

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